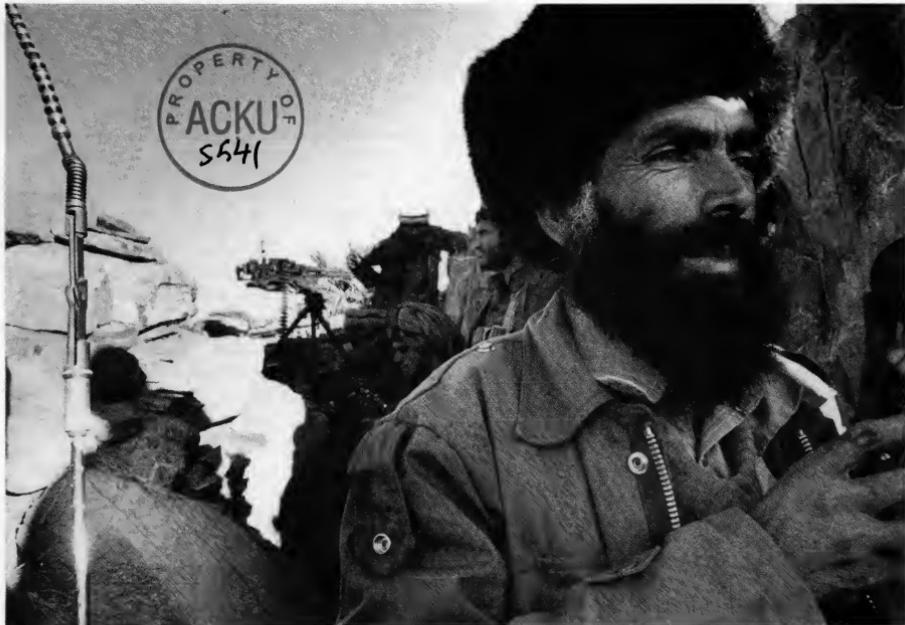


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# Free Afghanistan

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## BUZKASHI: THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

by Whitney Azoy

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### Profile    GUERRILLA WAR

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## AID TO THE AFGHAN WOUNDED

by Sir Oliver Forster

## FOREWORD



From LORD HOME OF THE HIRSEL K.T.

**Free Afghanistan** is designed to remind people that Afghanistan is an independent country and that its people have a right to choose their own form of government without intervention from outside.

No one must be allowed to forget that the Soviet Union forces invaded the country, and, contrary to all the pledges to which Russia's statesmen had subscribed as signatories of the U.N. Charter, still occupy the land with military force.

In spite of a recent announcement that some Soviet troops are to be withdrawn, all the key points are still in Russian hands, and their rule is enforced with ruthless efficiency and purpose.

One measure of their inhumanity and callous indifference to the welfare of the Afghan people are the millions of refugees who have been compelled to fly into Pakistan.

This magazine, to which people with knowledge of the facts contribute, makes sure that the rest of the world never forgets the plight of this country. That helps those in Afghanistan who resist tyranny with outstanding courage, to keep up their morale, and live for the day when they will once more be free. No one who values liberty and human rights can be content until that is seen to be true.

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# News Update . . . . .

## AMMUNITION DUMP NEAR KABUL BLOWN UP

On the night 26/27 August, the sky over Kabul was lit up by a massive firework display as one of the biggest Soviet ammunition dumps inside Afghanistan blew up. The explosions raged from nine-thirty until the following morning. According to eye-witnesses in Kabul, round about midnight two huge explosions were followed after a short interval by an enormous fireball which rose a thousand feet into the night sky over the city and a huge mushroom cloud. Windows were shattered in the centre of Kabul. The ammunition dump, situated at Qargha, between five and ten miles to the west of Kabul in a large restricted military area, was one of the largest Soviet installations in Afghanistan, and included stores of rocket missiles (SAM 2 anti-aircraft) as well as other types of ammunition.

The regime took the immediate step of claiming that 'technical failures' caused the explosion, but the seriousness of the incident in government eyes is shown by the Defence Minister (Nazar Mohammed) and Najib himself visiting the site the next day. Casualties seem to have been fairly high — possibly as many as a hundred killed and others injured, but the regime has refused to give figures.

It is still not absolutely clear what caused the blaze, but claims have been made by one or two Mujahideen groups. Evaluating these has proved difficult in Peshawar. While accidental causes cannot be completely eliminated, it is not at all unlikely that either sabotage or an attack by Mujahideen with ground-to-ground rockets was successful in destroying the key depot.

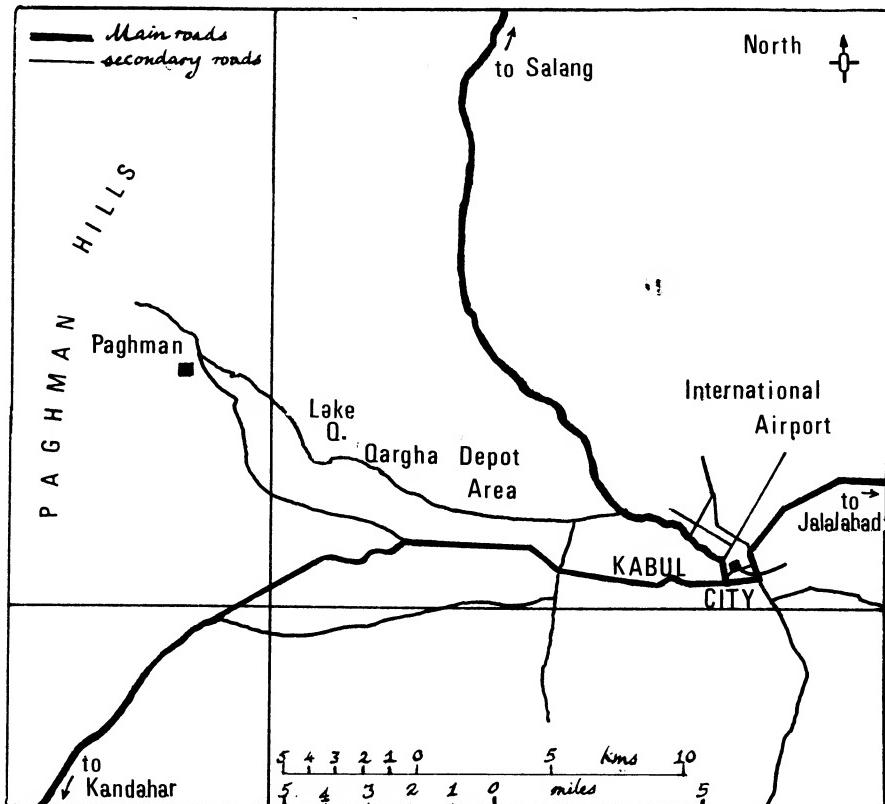
This speculation is strengthened by the report of a car-bomb explosion in the heart of Kabul during the recent visit of a Soviet Minister, which killed one or two people near the Soviet Embassy and which showed the extent to which the security of the regime is vulnerable.

At the same time, the renewed ferocity of the current Soviet campaign against Paghman, a small town

not far from Kabul and just north of the Qargha depot area of the Afghan Army 8th Division, shows Russian concern for the security of the capital's periphery.

A large battery of heavy artillery situated not far from the golf course near Lake Qargha has been seen in

action by diplomats playing their Friday round of golf. The heavy bombardment of Paghman has been going on for well over a month, and the operation is reported to involve Afghan troops on a divisional scale with a stiffening of as many as four thousand Russian regular troops.



## NAJIB'S TASK AHEAD

Dr Najibullah is almost certainly under orders from Moscow to succeed where his predecessor, Babrak Karmal, so conspicuously failed — to gain support for the Afghan revolution from a sufficiently large number of Afghans so that the pro-Soviet PDPA government can survive without the aid of Soviet troops. Like Karmal, Najibullah has stressed that the revolution — more accurately a "coup d'état" — of April 1978 is Islamic not Communist, that it stands for reform but

not the over-hasty and disastrously ill thought out measures introduced by Taraki and Amin between April 1978 and December 1979, and that it is democratic. But while Karmal spoke a lot in vague and general terms, Najibullah's speeches, though undoubtedly lengthy, are often to the point. A favourite target has been officials accused of corruption, some of whom have been censured or imprisoned. In August four ministers, including the Agriculture Minister, were put on three months

probation to fulfil their departmental targets. The clear alternative was dismissal.

The objective is obvious enough. National reconciliation, Najibullah

announced a few months back, is one of his greatest priorities. And how better to reconcile the still largely suspicious Afghan public to the Party than by exposing flagrant

acts of Party officials abusing their positions? Under Najibullah, the process of non-Party organisations being tolerated in the country has also been extended. It is now possible for many non-Party civil servants to feel they can keep their jobs, and even be promoted.

But it is very doubtful if these measures have won Najibullah much more than sighs of relief from amongst the long-suffering populations of Kabul and other Afghan cities under government control. The administration of Babrak Karmal, installed after the Soviet invasion of December 1979, is still virtually intact despite Karmal's removal. Najibullah may pose as the defender of Islam and the great reconciler, but he is an enthusiastic quoter of Lenin. The stranglehold of Soviet decision-makers is deeply unpopular, even, it is believed, among many PDPA members. But Najibullah's greatest liability is his determination to forge an efficient Afghan fighting machine with which to defeat the Mujahideen. Conscription is the one issue which, above all others, drives Afghan citizens to flee to Pakistan as refugees. Desermination from the Afghan army, as Najibullah has recently admitted, remains a problem — in fact a major problem. The Afghan army is still not trusted, by and large, by the Soviets. There are still reports from time to time that factional disputes between the Khalq and Parcham members of the armed forces further undermine their effectiveness.

It is also questionable how Najib's head-on criticisms will improve matters. When he attacks Afghan women for not joining the police force, or Afghan men for their exploitation of women, and teachers for shirking conscription, he is merely drawing attention to the government's lack of support. His frank admission that many land reform programmes have not taken place and that the youth "Pioneer" organisations barely exist in major cities such as Jalalabad and Kandahar, shows how skin-deep the revolution is in Afghan society, despite more than eight years of leftist rule. And it cannot have escaped the attention of many Afghans that Dr Najibullah's reforms bear an uncanny resemblance to those initiated by the Soviet Union's new Party General Secretary, Michail Gorbachov.

# AFGHANISTAN

## Who's Who at the Top

People's  
Democratic  
Party of  
Afghanistan

**P D P A**  
Politburo

**2 President**

## Revolutionary Council

Vice-Presidents  
Abdul Qader  
Gul Aqa (2)

Not Politburo:

A M Sarbuland ) Deputy PMs  
Prof P Guldad )  
Mohammad Aziz ) & Planning  
Sayed N M Parast )

Shah Mohd Dost  
Brig Gulabzoi  
Dr A G Lakanwal  
A S Qayumi  
Maulavi Hujat

Foreign Affairs  
Interior  
Agriculture  
Education  
Islamic Affairs

Eng. Sorkhabi Irrigation  
Burhanuddin Higher Education  
Ghiasi  
Sher Mazdooryar Transport  
Mohd K Jalalar Commerce  
Najibullah Masir Mines &  
Industries

(3)

Dr Mohd Kabir  
Mohd B Baghlan  
Dr R Mohd Paktin  
Eng. N Mohammed  
Dr M N Kamyar  
L A Lemar  
Finance  
Justice  
Power  
Construction  
Health  
Light Industries  
& Foodstuffs

Dr Faqir Mohd Yaqubi Minister Without Portfolio

**2 State 1 PARTY 3 Government**

# RESETTLEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN?

*by Anthony Hyman*

In a Reuter's agency message from Kabul at the beginning of September it was stated that the Afghan government planned to move as many as 300,000 people from the eastern provinces, as part of a long-term strategy to develop the sensitive border with Pakistan. The report said that farmers would be moved voluntarily from the eastern provinces of Kunar, Laghman and Paktia to the western region bordering Iran, to Farah, Helmand and Nimruz.

Much about this resettlement project remains vague or uncertain. It may even fail to get off the ground. Initial reactions reported by Reuter's from Kabul (as 'Western Diplomatic' sources) varied from a comment that the new leader Dr Najib appeared to have opted for a full-scale "hearts, minds and wallets" campaign to build government support, to a comparison with the 'virgin lands' drive in the USSR under Nikita Kruschev, and the 'new economic zones' which the Hanoi government gave over to peasants to farm after the end of the war in Vietnam.

The Agricultural Minister Dr Abdul Ghaffar Lakanwal reportedly explained the policy as aimed at developing agriculture and light industry in the east, where there was said to be high hidden unemployment; "So the surplus labour will have to be absorbed in the south-west", he stated. He also said that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) had been asked to help with the proposed resettlement. (Though Dr Lakanwal gave no details of any reply received from FAO officials, there is little likelihood that a UN agency would involve itself in any development work outside the Afghan capital Kabul until the war is over. UN agency work is at present at a low ebb in Afghanistan, being restricted to the capital.)

The details given to Reuter's of land available in the south-western region are significant about the visionary aspect of this proposed scheme for resettlement. Apparently only about 45,000 acres of land will be available through irrigation in Helmand and Nimruz, which are said to be enough for just 15,000 families in the current five-year

plan.

Reuter's quoted Dr Lakanwal as agreeing there might be difficulties in getting the local Afghan tribes and rural communities to co-operate but stressed there would not be forced resettlement from the troubled war-zones of the south-east: "We do not want to destroy the traditional ways of the people. We will not force them to move", he reportedly said.

It is obvious that the announcement of a resettlement scheme has much, if not everything to do with politics and strategic needs, rather than economic development. Whether it will be achieved or not, in the present state of chaos and anarchy in the war-zones, is impossible to predict. What is curious is the explanation offered of over-population and 'high hidden unemployment' in the south-eastern provinces, for each of them has suffered very seriously by the ravages of war and has lost a high percentage of population since 1979. Thousands of deserted, or near-deserted, villages in the south-east region bordering Pakistan bear witness to the Soviet-Afghan government strategy of clearing the rural population from zones of strategic importance, and forcing villagers into exile in Pakistan or Iran, or to leave their homes for refuge in the cities. That Dr Lakanwal stressed the benefits for those villagers who stayed in the south-east sounds distinctly ominous, for it implies that the Kabul regime wants only those Afghans supporting it to stay on. This border region has been important from the beginning of the war for supply routes for the guerrilla resistance inside Afghanistan, and the fewer Afghan villages staying there the better, as far as the regime is concerned, since creating a desert there reduces sharply the ability of guerrilla groups to cross and get shelter, food or information from sympathetic village communities.

In a longer perspective resettlement of population is not only natural, but almost certainly beneficial to Afghanistan's rural economy. The Helmand River irrigation scheme from the 1940s was a large-scale US-Afghan aid project, intended to create a large tract of

irrigated land which could greatly increase agricultural production. Its very limited success was due to a number of factors, but this arid region bordering Iran could undoubtedly provide the country with plentiful irrigated land, given large investment in development and peace.

Population resettlement has been a common tool of rulers to control recalcitrant populations through history. In Afghanistan too, it was used under Amir Abdur Rahman Khan in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when rebellious Pashtun tribes of the south were forced to resettle north of the Hindu Kush in non-Pashtun regions of the country. In the 1920s and 1930s, a large part of the undeveloped northern region belonging to the Uzbeks and Tajiks was peopled by Pashtun tribes sent from various provinces of the south west and eastern borderlands. Pashtun rulers, in effect, 'colonised' non-Pashtun regions, also incidentally increasing the agricultural production of a potentially rich but neglected part of the country. The effect of heavy bombardments and reprisals in the anti-guerrilla war since 1979 has been to reverse this redistribution of population around Afghanistan. A large part of the northern Pashtun population has been forced out of their villages, many fleeing to Pakistan or Iran. Some, it appears, have been forced to flee from attacks by their own Afghan (and non-Pashtun) neighbours, belonging almost always to different, and rival, political parties of the resistance. Owing to the war-time conditions, Kabul's population has at least doubled in size — like so many capitals in other war-torn countries before it. Their experience suggests it is difficult to move back to villages people who have become accustomed to city life.

Whether this resulting new pattern of rural population remains true even after any peace settlement is reached to end the war is impossible to predict. A few refugees have returned to their villages from Pakistan in recent years, but the vast majority have stayed in the camps, and may well continue to live in Pakistan, even if peace returns to their homeland.

# BUZKASHI: THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

by Whitney Azoy

**There is nothing quite like Buzkashi:** Whitney Azoy describes this breath-taking ancestral game from the steppes of Central Asia, and examines the consequences of its transfer across the Hindu Kush to Kabul.

"If you want to know what we're really like, go to a *buzkashi* game." This advice, first afforded me at a Kabul diplomatic reception in 1972, went beyond the familiar notion that games express cultural meaning. English cricket, American football, Spanish *corrida de toros* — each, anthropologists tell us, is rooted in its cultural ethos. Each communicates values and attitudes. The Afghan suggestion went further: that, in the case of *buzkashi*, people are what they play. That life for many Afghans, even at the best of times, behaves like their wild and volatile game.

*Buzkashi* means goat-dragging, but this Persian term, common in Kabul and outside Afghanistan, misleads in two respects. First, the carcass ordinarily used is that of a calf; it lasts longer (usually about three hours in the no-time-limit rural contests) before being torn to shreds. Second and more important, the game is indigenous not to Persian or Pushtu speakers but to ethnic Turks — Turkmen, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz — whose horseman forefathers migrated to northern Afghanistan centuries ago and who still refer to their ancestral pastime as *ulaq*. The linguistic usage of *buzkashi* reflects a 30 year effort by successive Kabul governments to portray the game as Afghanistan's national (and nationalistic) sport.

As with virtually all folkgames, the origins of *buzkashi* are not known in any great detail. Very likely it began, much like American rodeo, as leisure time "horseplay," an extension of the serious skills on which day-to-day life depended. The "legend" that live prisoners of war were once used appears to have sprung from the luridly fertile imagination of contemporary tourism boosters.

Whatever its history, *buzkashi* today is all about control. On the most immediate and obvious level of play, men on horseback (sometimes several hundred in the traditional, non-government games) struggle for control of the animal carcass. With its head and hooves removed, a two-year old calf can still weigh around 100 pounds. Sometimes — in Kabul for instance — the carcass is gutted so that the ensuing action will be faster and, for sideline spectators, more exciting. Native aficionados in the North scoff at this concession to spectacle: "Only with a heavy calf will it become apparent who's who, who's in control."

Traditional *buzkashi* is simple to explain but, in its sheer wild power, almost impossible to describe. There are no formal teams, uniformed referees, demarcated fields, or official time limits. "You get there," as one informant once put the matter succinctly, "and it begins. First a few horses, then more and more. The prize money starts. The best riders arrive. Then you've got a *buzkashi*."

Horses crash together in a concentric mass around the calf carcass: weak on the outside, strong in the middle. Only the finest riders on the most powerful horses — Tosh Palawan, for instance, on the famous stallion of Sardar Hafiz — ever get near the centre and glimpse the carcass on the ground. Whip clenched in his teeth and one leg cocked behind the saddle, the rider leans down into the dust and grabs. Metal stirrups graze his

head; unshod hooves batter his fingers. Lunging half-blind in the melee, he gets hold of a calf leg — but not for long. "Every calf," they say, "has four legs," and another rider wrenches the carcass away. Nothing stands still. The calf is dragged, trampled, tugged, dropped, lifted and lost again in the struggle for sole control. Eventually one horse and rider take the carcass free and clear, and let it fall in triumph. A brief respite for prizes and praise — and then another cycle starts: the increasingly mangled calf carcass on the ground and the mass of horsemen gathered around it. Over and over again, perhaps forty times from mid-morning to late afternoon, the struggle for control is played and replayed. There are winners and losers. Some men never win; no man wins for long.

All the while another level of "game" is under way, another level in the struggle for control. Traditional *buzkashi*'s objective (to take the calf free and clear) is simple to explain but hard to adjudicate. The problem: how free is free, how clear is clear, and — the ultimate issue — who's to decide? With no lines drawn on the ground, the game is riddled with disputes which, given the violent and volatile nature of play, can quickly escalate into battles. What is understood one moment as "for fun" — pushing, shoving, crashing into each other — can suddenly become "for real." Whips can turn into weapons and knives appear from nowhere. Not all *buzkashis*, not even most of them, deteriorate to this extent. Some contain no more than a squabble or two. Some, the most successful from the sponsor's point of view, take place with no public hint of dispute. What happens (and doesn't happen) on this level represents, so the cannier observers claim, *buzkashi*'s real attraction. Here is where northern Afghanistan really learns who's who.

The key to understanding traditional *buzkashi* lies in the recognition that its principal participants, the *khans*, are also the main figures in day-to-day life outside the game. In both domains, furthermore, *khans* compete against each other as rivals for the good things of life. On a day-to-day basis *khans* compete for control over such items as land, water, livestock, and women. In *buzkashi* it is the *khans* who own the best horses, employ the most skillful riders, and (most important) sponsor the *buzkashi* gatherings. When one khan's horse wins repeatedly, when his faction wins a *buzkashi* dispute, or when the *buzkashi* he sponsors is conducted without mishap — his name, as they say, "rises" and other men are drawn to him as followers in the hope of real-world political spoils. It is as if — difficult to conceive in the West where play and politics are supposed to be separate — top politicians sponsored champion boxers who periodically got in the ring together for a free-for-all with the reputations of their individual sponsors at stake. Whichever *khan* can control a *buzkashi* will also, so the reckoning goes, be able to control real-world events and thus to provide followers with real-world spoils. Power is what power seems. Sanctioned by the normative framework of play, *buzkashi* provides a dramatic arena



Buzkashi at Kabul, King's Birthday, October 1970 — courtesy L. Dupree and Princeton University

in which reputations for political power are enhanced or diminished.

In 1953 the royal government of Afghanistan resolved to bring *buzkashi* across the Hindu Kush to Kabul. For nearly three decades, until 1980, a tournament was sponsored successively by Zahir, Daoud, Taraki, Amin, and Karmal. Played first on a field in the suburb of Bagrami and later in Ghazi Stadium, the game was reorganized (by the Afghan National Olympic Committee) to minimize disputes. Participants were grouped in provincial teams with no more than about two dozen horsemen on the field at once. The ambiguity of "free and clear" was replaced by flags and chalked circles. Games started and finished at set times. Military officers served as referees and, perhaps most important of all, soldiers patrolled the sidelines.

The change in form only made the implicitly political message more powerful. Now the struggle for control was strictly limited to the calf carcass. Control of the *buzkashi* as a whole remained firmly in government hands. Horseowner *khanas* were quietly relegated to the sidelines. The few disputes which arose were quickly stifled and their instigators thrown in prison. All told, the government tournament became a spectacle rich in subtle political meaning: the biggest of *buzkashis* (in terms of geographical range), sustained for the longest period (almost two weeks in the heyday of Daoud), with the fewest disputes — all in the name of the greatest *khan* of all, the Head of State.

At first the tournament was scheduled to celebrate Zahir Shah's October birthday. Daoud shifted the date to United Nations Day and placed an enormous portrait of himself (looking to expatriate wags like an Afghan Telly Savalas) atop the stadium. In 1978 Taraki increased the number of presidential portraits to three. A year later his successor and murderer Hafizullah Amin shifted the date yet again (but still, conveniently, within October) "to mark the 62nd anniversary of the Great Socialist Revolution." Ominously from the sponsorship point of view, the tournament was shortened to 11 days. The central government, in *buzkashi* as in other matters, was losing its capacity for political command and control. And in 1980, even with the added support of 85,000 Russian troops, the Kabul tournament lasted less than a week. Three provinces (Bamiyan, Parwan, and

Takhar) sent no team.

Since then *buzkashi* has been played spasmodically in Afghanistan. For a time all gatherings of horsemen were banned in the North. "The Russians," one refugee told me, "remember our horsemen 'from the time of Bokhara.'" More recently there are reports of the government's once again trying to co-opt the game. As early as 1980 the Karmal regime attempted to put an old game to new ideological purposes:

*Buzkashi* is a manifestation of the spirit of the struggle of our people and a shining example of the rich cultural heritage of our country. This year the autumn *buzkashi* contests begin at a time when the ideals and aspirations of the new evolutionary phase of the Saur Revolution are getting realized one after another. . . . But our enemies, the criminal U.S. imperialism together with the Peking chauvinists, send counter-revolutionary bands, mercenaries, and professional murderers from Pakistan. . . . These traitors and exported bands are treacherously trying to prevent the people from performing their traditional economies and living their normal and humane lives.

The professional thieves and criminals even steal and annihilate the *buzkashi* horses which are raised and trained with large sums of money and great efforts for the local game.

— Kabul *New Times*, December 2, 1980

Today the most accessible *buzkashi* takes place alongside the Charsadda Road outside Peshawar on Friday mornings in the winter. Consult downtown carpet merchants (Turkmans and Uzbeks from northern Afghanistan) for details. With traditional society in Afghanistan so altered by the war, it is doubtful whether the cultural base of *buzkashi* will ever be reconstituted, whether post-war notables will still host *buzkashi* gatherings to celebrate their sons' circumcisions, whether post-war politics will depend on the system of informal reputation in which *buzkashi* plays a part. More likely, even when the Russians leave, *buzkashi* in Afghanistan will evolve still further from folkgame to organized sport. This transformation is already complete in the Soviet and Chinese areas of Turkestan where the game, once so evocative of equestrian freedom, has been reduced to a scheduled item in government folk festivals.

But one never knows. "Every calf has four legs," and any prediction of *buzkashi*'s future could prove an uncertain grab.

# ANATOMY OF A SOVIET-INSPIRED REGIME

One of the notable facts to have emerged about the two factions/parties Khalq and Parcham of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) is that from their earliest days in 1965 both were fully-fledged Communist parties in the classical mould, complete with all the trappings of Soviet-type apparatus: this much is clear from the Constitution of the PDPA which was published in 1978, thirteen years after its adoption, and which was adhered to by both Khalq and Parcham in form even during the years in which they split wide apart.

It was not therefore so surprising, soon after the *coup* of April 1978, that the long-term process of full Sovietisation of Afghanistan was put in motion, with the ultimate aim of replicating the structure of control

common to communist regimes throughout the world.

To understand how ruling Communist parties based on the Soviet model operate, it may be helpful to draw a diagram. The first point to be borne in mind is that when a Communist party attains power, by whatever means, it needs to re-organise the apparatus of the state, making it subordinate to that of the Party according to Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

Afghanistan is no exception. Following the current Soviet model,

there are now three sets of institutions: in descending order of importance, they are those of the Party, the Legislature and the Government. The Party is always supreme: as the 'vanguard of the revolution' it is the ultimate source and repository of all power; the Legislature (contrary to western democratic practice) and the Government are both subordinate. Thus the Secretary-General of the Communist Party always ranks above the state President, which can cause confusion for westerners.

At the risk of over-simplification, set out schematically the three groups of institutions look something like this:

Institution and Senior Post	Superior Functionaries	Main Body	Subordinate Groups
<b>PARTY</b> Secretary-General (Leader)	Secretaries Politburo Party Control Commission	Central Committee Full members Candidate Members	Provincial organisations Primary organisations
<b>LEGISLATURE</b> President (Head of State)	Presidium	Revolutionary Council People's Delegates	Trade Union Central Council Jirgah
<b>GOVERNMENT</b> Chairman (ie Prime Minister)	Council of Ministers	Ministries & Government Departments	Provincial authorities

## Notes:

The Armed Forces and the Security Service (KHAD in Afghanistan) are the most important functional organs in a Communist state. They both come under very close Party control.

Senior members of the Party occupy top positions in both Legislature and Government, and the best guide for assessing the weight given to any function is to discover the Party standing of the individual occupying the post.

Applying these principles in Afghanistan, we find confirmation in the order in which the three top names are now given in formal announcements:

Comrade Najibullah  
Secretary-General of the PDPA  
Central Committee.

Comrade Babrak Karmal  
President of the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) Revolutionary Council.

Comrade Sultan 'Ali Keshtmand  
Chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers

The above shows the importance of the Party over the other two institutions as well as the overall control vested in the Central Committee, and, *a fortiori*, in the organs which control the Committee and the Party: the Politburo, the Party Control Commission, and above all the

Secretariat led in this case by Najibullah.

Recent reports of meetings of the Plenum (full Committee) have given Kabul-watchers some interesting indications of the current standing of leading members of the regime. One development of particular interest has been the apparent demotion of Yasin Sadeqi. He had enjoyed a fairly meteoric rise in the past few years, but the same announcement of the Plenum included an item to the effect that Yasin Sadeqi was being relieved of his post of Secretary of the Central Committee 'as a result of his appointment to another post' — in communist terms, a very severe downturn.

# GUERRILLA WAR

## INTRODUCTION

***James Henderson***

The romantic image of the Afghan Mujahideen, fiercely independent and cunning fighters, with an innate understanding of the art of war, has been readily adopted by the West. Received from past military campaigns, and to a certain extent encouraged by the Mujahideen themselves, it gives a false impression of the struggle for independence led by the Afghan Resistance.

The biggest difference between the present conflict and those in which the Afghans have previously been involved is the overwhelming power of the Red Army. This well-equipped and highly trained twentieth-century machine has come to a country whose methods of war have not changed for centuries.

The stakes are higher for the Mujahideen than they have ever been. It is no longer possible for them to snipe in their traditional way until the enemy withdraws. Now they are pitted against gunships and jets and well-trained airborne troops. It is obvious that if their cause is to continue they will have to form an effective guerrilla resistance, making it painful enough, soon enough, to compel the Soviet Union to look for a solution.

The logistics of fighting a war in Afghanistan have been difficult enough for the Red Army with its modern communications, and they are proportionally higher for the Mujahideen who depend on pack animals for their supply

lines and elementary communications in battle. The same difficulties that beset the Mujahideen in their efforts to create a centralised command also hamper foreign observers who try to produce an overall view of the conflict. The face of the war may look quite different from one valley to the next.

It seems that the vast proportion of the population of the country is prepared to support the Mujahideen, but the strains on civilians living in a country at war are severe. The Mujahideen have come to realise that they must support the people if they are to be supported by them in return.

If the Mujahideen effort is not to spiral down into sporadic terrorism then they must harness the undoubted bravery of their fighters to create an effective guerrilla resistance machine.

In the following Profile our contributors examine various aspects of the war in Afghanistan in historical and contemporary perspectives.



# THE GUERRILLA

*Christopher Dobson*

The Guerrilla, the 'little war', was given its name by the Spaniards, mainly peasants, who fought a no-quarter war of raid and ambush against Napoleon's occupying regular army. Their tactics and aims were precisely those of the Afghan Mujahideen fighting against the Red Army today.

This is not surprising for the tactics and philosophy of the guerrilla are immutable and any commander who attempts to change them does so at his peril. It is one of the paradoxes of the guerrilla that the most flexible form of warfare is in fact governed by the strictest of rules.

They were laid down as long ago as the fourth century B.C. in China by Sun Tzu who in *The Art of War* wrote: "All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near. Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him. When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him. Anger his general and confuse him. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance. Keep him under strain and wear him down. When he is united, divide him. Attack where he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you. The commander who understands the strategy of the indirect approach will be victorious."

In more ponderous fashion Clausewitz said the guerrillas "*must not attempt to crack the nut, they must only gnaw on the surface and the borders.*" And, mixing his metaphors, described them as "*a kind of nebulous vapoury essence*" who should . . . "*never condense into a solid body; otherwise the enemy sends an adequate force against this core . . . on the other hand this mist should collect at some points*

*into denser masses, and form threatening clouds from which now and again a formidable flash of lightning may burst forth. . . ”*

It was Mao Tse Tung who refined the theory of guerrilla warfare with his classic definition: "*The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.*" Mao was a brilliant guerrilla leader. His great mistake was, after using guerrilla tactics to conquer a great nation, he tried to use those same tactics to govern the country — and they failed utterly. But that is another story.

**Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Mao, Kipling** on the North-West Frontier, **Lawrence of Arabia, Che Guevara, George Grivas** and many others have hammered home the lessons of "the war of the flea". The subject is taught at staff colleges. History provides a stream of examples to modern generals and politicians. Any war correspondent can expound the theory, and some of them, the practice, of guerrilla warfare.

Which brings us to the second great paradox of the guerrilla: that despite it being so well understood, so many generals and — especially — so many politicians get it wrong when confronted by a guerrilla war. They behave as if this form of warfare had only just been invented, designed specifically to attack them.

Their reaction is always the same. They send in more and more troops, drop bigger and bigger bombs, kill more and more civilians. They do not seem to understand that guerrilla warfare is not a military attempt to break the strength of a standing army but is essentially political, designed to break the will of the government. By sending in more troops they are only giving the guerrillas more targets.

Nowhere is this better exemplified

than in the sad history of Vietnam. I remember with horror being on patrol with an American unit in the jungle.

None of the young soldiers were regulars. They wore deodorants that could be smelled fifty yards away. They played their transistor radios. Helicopters buzzed overhead delivering their steaks and icecream. And before they settled down for the night they each emptied two magazines into the jungle in a "reconnaissance by fire". Every Vietcong for miles around knew precisely where they were. The miracle of Vietnam was not that the Americans took so many casualties but that they took so few.

Here we come to another paradox: that the United States which glories in the stories of old "injun fighters" and used guerrilla tactics so effectively against the serried ranks of King George's Hessian redcoats, seems to have such an aversion to the proper use of special forces.

The Green Berets who had performed creditably in Vietnam were disbanded with indecent haste when President Nixon pulled out (leaving South Vietnam to be defeated not by the Vietcong but by the tanks of Hanoi's regular army).

It was not until the threat of international terrorism became apparent that the US Army establishment with great reluctance allowed Colonel "Chargin' Charlie" Beckwith to form Delta Force. Alas, his first operation, to free the American diplomatic hostages being held in Teheran, ended in disaster and the US Army still looks on special forces with great suspicion.

The point is that as guerrilla warfare is a very special type of political-military combat conducted by special people it has to be countered by special soldiers. It is useless sending soldiers trained for a formal war

into the war of the flea. What you need is better trained fleas with sharper teeth.

The British learnt this lesson during the Malayan "Emergency" when the Special Air Service emerged from its happy but precarious existence as a territorial regiment to start its rebirth as Britain's pre-eminent modern regiment.

Strangely enough, the lessons learnt in Malaya were not applied later in Cyprus where National Servicemen scoured the Cyprus hills searching in vain for the elusive **Colonel Grivas**. There were, however, two essential differences between the Malayan and Cyprus campaigns.

In Malaya the army, by use of the "protected villages" system, were able to cut the Chinese guerrillas off from their food supplies. This was impossible in Cyprus where EOKA was able to "swim in the sea" of the Greek Cypriot people. And, while in Malaya the war was essentially a guerrilla war fought in the jungle and plantations, in Cyprus, **Grivas** fought what was principally a war of urban terrorism. His fighters only took to the mountains when they were "blown" in the towns. **Grivas** himself spent most of his time living in a villa in Limassol.

More importantly, there was hardly any support in Britain for the Chinese communists in Malaya, but there was a great deal of support, especially among Labour politicians, for EOKA's cause. Britain had the will to win in Malaya. It lost the will to win in Cyprus.

Every guerrilla campaign preaches the same lesson. Batista lost Cuba to **Castro**, not because his army had been defeated in the field but because he had lost the will to fight and, anyway, he had millions of dollars tucked away in banks all round the world. And, once he had flown away from Havana, his army decided to soldier no more.

In Palestine, which Britain was occupying not as a colonialist power but under a Mandate from the defunct League of Nations, the will to stay and fight both Jewish and Arab guerrillas when both the United States and Russia were in favour of the establishment of an Israeli state, was minimal. The whole affair could have been settled much sooner and with less bloodshed if the then British Foreign Minister Ernie Bevin had not been so anti-semitic.

What the British army was confronting then was not one but two guerrilla armies both swimming in the sea of their opposing peoples — an impossible situation.

It is Algeria and the war waged against the French colonists there which is so often compared with the current war in Afghanistan but the comparison is false because Algeria was part of metropolitan France and had been settled by a heterogeneous colony of more than a million Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards and Corsicans, the "*pieds-noirs*".

These people saw Algeria as their home, just as the white Rhodesians saw Rhodesia-Zimbabwe as their home and the Boers see South Africa as their home. Unlike the British Army in Palestine or the Red Army in Afghanistan, the French Army in Algeria saw their task not as fighting for some strange political concept but as defending part of their homeland and, incidentally, restoring the glory that the army had lost in Indo-China.

The army would have continued to fight; some of them were prepared to bring down the government to do so and tried to kill their President, General de Gaulle, in the cause of "*Algerie Francaise*". But de Gaulle outwitted them — while managing to stay alive — and took the political decision to withdraw from Algeria.

Where there is similarity between the Front de Liberation Nationale and the Mujahideen is in their methods of struggle: a friendly frontier providing sanctuary, supply routes and training grounds; knowledge and use of the country to mount operations; the development of tactics to counteract air power; the mobilisation of the people, and, especially, utilisation of their enemies' political errors.

The French Army in Algeria was guilty of a brutality and torture which shocked liberal France and brought about a crisis of conscience in the high command. The Russian Army in Afghanistan is guilty of similar brutality and, while this is hardly likely to bring about demonstrations in Red Square or give Russian generals sleepless nights, it does give the Mujahideen an effective international weapon of propaganda.

This brings us back, once again, to the question of the will to win. When the British Army was learning

guerrilla tactics in Waziristan campaigns and fighting raiding Arab tribes in Iraq after the First World War, the question of the will to win, of a political decision, played no part in the affair.

It was purely military business, but since the Second World War when Winston Churchill launched the greatest guerrilla effort of all time by ordering the Special Operations Executive to "set Europe alight", virtually every guerrilla campaign has been won and lost not on the battlefield but in the columns of the newspapers and, from Vietnam onwards, on the television screens in everybody's sitting room.

The Mau Mau lost because, like the Chicomis in Malaya, they were not only defeated by superior tactics, they had no political support outside their own country.

Clever use was made by the British of the details of the gruesome oaths Mau Mau recruits were obliged to take and what support there was for the Mau Mau eroded under the impact of these details and horrific murders carried out by the terrorist gangs. One of the tactics evolved in the Mau Mau emergency was that of "pseudo gangs" made up of captured Mau Mau led by British officers. These "pseudo gangs" were the invention of a young officer called Frank Kitson, now General Sir Frank Kitson, author of the bible of guerrilla warfare, "Low Intensity Operations".

The Americans lost Vietnam because they never really had any will to win and because the morale of the army and the civilian population was destroyed by the television cameras and commentators.

The Omani rebels lost because they came up against the Special Air Service and because the cruel old Sultan was deposed by his enlightened son, Sultan Qaboos, whose reforms destroyed the political and social basis of the rebellion.

The Provisional IRA continue their campaign, not in the belief that they are going to defeat the security forces, but in the hope that the British people will get tired of the struggle and give them what they want.

And that really is the essence of modern guerrilla warfare. It is said that it is a process of unending attrition. That may be so, but it is the attrition not so much of military power but of political resolution.

**More than most wars the current struggle in Afghanistan depends on constant media attention — even then there are those who regard it as 'forgotten'. Seven years after the Soviet invasion, Western correspondents who have devoted much time and effort trying to get coverage of the resistance fighters appear disillusioned: the fighting seems to have reached a plateau, and nothing seems to have advanced. The Western public has been educated to expect new developments in all other fields; certainly this is the case in Afghanistan. At all events a note of**

Western observers' assessments of the progress of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan vary from one extreme to the other. A degree of wishful thinking exists in some circles, notably in those with a vested interest in covertly supporting the Mujahideen. Yet these observers often lack direct contact with what is actually happening on the ground. One Western journalist who has been on a number of trips inside complained that officials representing the US government rejected out of hand his rather pessimistic view of the Mujahideen's performance.

Comparisons are inevitable. When placed alongside the performance of, for example, the Viet Cong, that of the Mujahideen is not very impressive. Yet by the time the Americans were fully involved in Vietnam, the Viet Cong had the background of twenty years fighting experience. The Mujahideen have been fighting for seven.

However, some observers are clearly dismayed at the lack of real progress. One Western correspondent felt it had something to do with the odds stacked against the Mujahideen. "It's a case of shepherds and farmers against Superpower technology. If the Mujahideen are to be supplied with Stinger missiles they need intelligent people to train up in their use." Others feel that the Mujahideen are refusing to learn the lessons necessary to wage a guerrilla war, that they lack motivation, authority and discipline and finally they have no overall strategy, so that their early successes were in proportion to Soviet and Afghan Army failures.

TV cameraman Peter Jouvenal, who has made twenty-seven journeys inside Afghanistan, feels there is certainly a need for improvement. "The only commanders we know have improved are Abdul Haq and Ahmed Shah Massoud. But a lot of

## BLEAK OUTLOOK? WESTERN OBSERVERS' VIEW

### *Julian Gearing*

strong pessimism is now heard in Western press circles in and around Afghanistan. Does this criticism, some of it quite harsh, describe the situation fairly, or is it an expression of frustration by highly trained and sympathetic observers whose perspectives may not all be shared

by the participants themselves?

Julian Gearing, a journalist, has been following the course of the war since 1981 and has made a number of journeys inside Afghanistan with the Mujahideen. Here he puts forward the views of some Western observers of the war in Afghanistan.



Photo: J. Gearing

*the Mujahideen who have been fighting for seven years do not consider that they have been making mistakes. Although they do not achieve anything militarily they are quite happy to carry on."*

*"The groups close to the border have been spoilt and have had too many weapons, as in the case of Zhawar. The controllers of the supply of weapons favour the Pashtuns and that is why they have surplus weapons. And in these areas the military development is the worst. They have not felt the need to improve because if things get too hot they can retreat across the border to Pakistan. They are still fighting the same sort of war as when the Russians invaded, the only difference being that they have more weapons. The siege at the government position at Urgun has been going on for three years. Guerrillas should not lay siege to a position for three years. They should either try to take it and get out, or leave it alone."*

*"The Mujahideen well inside Afghanistan, away from the border, have had to fight harder and to capture their weapons. But in the*

*Pashtun areas close to the border they often don't even need to go to get weapons. These are often brought to them. There is a tendency to waste ammunition due to this ease of availability."*

*"But the Mujahideen are adapting to the change in Soviet tactics, though they learn the hard way. One commander has said that this is good in that it is forcing the Mujahideen to become true guerrillas. Because their bases are targeted they realise that they are not safe there; and therefore that they need to become more mobile."*

*"One of the problems is that the Russians have been driving the civilians out of a lot of areas so that it is now hard for these mobile groups to pick up intelligence, and consequently they run into ambushes. It still tends to be a localised war and this is because of the politics of the parties in certain areas, primarily Pashtun areas."*

*"The Mujahideen are getting better at using their weapons, but the problem is training. Often they train the wrong people with the wrong motives. But the parties that do train*

*the right people do come up with results. However not enough of them are hitting the target. In Panjshir it has improved. They do not waste ammunition and if they do attack a target it is for a purpose. Whereas in the border areas, because there is no problem with the supply of ammunition, there is a great deal of waste and lack of know-how."*

*"The Mujahideen are playing right into the government's hands, but again this is the Pushtuns. The Pushtuns think that they are Mujahid, that they are brave and that as long as they attack these government posts, they are doing their bit for the Jihad. The fact that these*

*sufficient number of anti-aircraft missiles, and the training to go with it could alter the face of the war. But this will never happen because of Soviet retaliation on Pakistan."*

#### A MATTER OF TIME

Any consideration of guerrilla war cannot be examined in purely military terms. The political, social, economic and psychological elements must be taken into account. But the Mujahideen are only just beginning to deal effectively with these areas and it would be wrong to expect too much too soon. Guerrilla armies in other areas



Photo: J. Gearing

*attacks have no overall effect is not their problem. They will not admit that they do not know what they are doing. What they do not realise is that the government has put these positions there for a purpose, to draw attention away from the roads and cities. And the Mujahideen waste their time attacking these positions. The Soviets retaliate immediately by bombing the civilians, and it keeps most of the fighting away from the cities."*

*"Also part of the reason that the Pushtun Mujahideen fight is to capture equipment so that they can sell it. And there is a lot of equipment in these parts."*

*"One of the problems is that the weapons they are receiving are not of good quality. Rifles are not zeroed and equipment malfunctions. But that is all to do with the policies of the donating countries. These are not willing to give them the equipment they need. With the same level of backing from the Americans as was given to the Vietnamese by the Russians and the Chinese, there could be a real problem for the Soviets. A*

of the world have taken ten, twenty or even thirty years to mature.

#### THE GAME IS OVER

But it is no longer a game. During the early stages of the war, and even to an extent today, groups would set off much as young men go to football matches in the West. Improved Soviet weapons and tactics, combined with heavy offensives, have provided an altogether more serious scenario. In many areas the Mujahideen are on the defensive, unable to carry out effective attacks on communist targets. Cities have become more difficult to penetrate. Traffic moves relatively unimpeded on the roads, though normally with air cover.

A serious drawback is the lack of co-ordination and unity. There is a tendency to fight a localised war seldom moving far from the home base. And it is a war in which the personality of the Mujahideen commander is all important. Because of this the death of the better commanders has left gaps that are difficult to fill.

#### PRESSURE ON CIVILIANS

But increased pressure on the Mujahideen is not the only problem. Civilian support is being seriously affected despite an obvious willingness to back the Mujahideen. Military, economic and psychological pressure is taking its toll. Between one and two million internal refugees are now hiding out in the mountains or have had to move to the cities. The support of the civilians is a key element if the Mujahideen intend to progress.

#### NOTABLE SUCCESSES

But Soviet and Afghan government targets are being hit. And in some cases very hard. Abdul Haq's description of how he and his men carried out the destruction of a major ammunition depot close to the city of Kabul in August indicates an excellent grasp of guerrilla tactics. In the same month a major Afghan government garrison at Fakhar, in Takhar province fell to a combined Mujahideen force from five areas in the north, under the command of Abdul Wadood. This was a visible demonstration of Panjshir commander Massoud's efforts to co-ordinate his activities with other groups in the north.

The fact is that it has become a serious war in forcing the Mujahideen to improve their performance or to step into the side-lines. There are signs of improvements in discipline, planning, reconnaissance and deployment. Lessons are slowly being learnt.

#### LONG WAR AHEAD

During the Vietnam war spokesmen for the Viet Cong stated that even if it took a hundred years they would continue to fight the foreign occupation forces. The same sentiments are voiced by the Mujahideen.

Their refusal to accept anything but an Islamic government in Kabul conflicts with the Soviet Union's unwillingness to withdraw their troops unless a friendly government is in power. Soviet talk of withdrawal is merely being used as a smokescreen to cover up their intention to remain.

Mujahideen activity will continue, and in certain areas increased Soviet pressure will succeed in weeding out those groups that perform poorly. However, as one Western observer pointed out: "Unless Pakistan changes its policy and channels appropriate aid to the more effective groups it will be difficult to turn the tables on the Soviet forces."

# THE MUJAHIDEEN VIEWED FROM WITHIN

*Professor Sayd Majrooh, Afghanistan Information Centre*

After seven years of war the Soviets have still not been able to expand their area of control into the countryside. They have been trying to hold on to the cities and the supply routes. This year, contrary to some people's impression, was the heaviest attack on the city of Kabul by the Mujahideen: take for example, among other attacks, the large ammunition dump that exploded in August. And this is despite the fact that the Soviets have increased their security ring around the city. Also this year in other parts of the country we hear the same news. Consider the garrison at Kunar which is under heavy Mujahideen attack, and the cities of Kandahar and Herat.

The country is still free. The Mujahideen have improved; they are not making a frontal war, the war has changed into a guerrilla war. In tribal areas they are still inclined to wage a frontal war, but they are learning also.

The level of arms supply is not ideal but it is improving.

The weakest area of the Mujahideen is their information and propaganda effort. The Mujahideen are only listening to the BBC, the VOA etc and this is not a good information service for finding out what is happening in other parts of the country. There is a great deal of disinformation about the situation and there are false impressions; for example, that the Mujahideen are not united. In fact the situation is better inside Afghanistan.

At the beginning of the year the Mujahideen were on the defensive due to heavy Soviet military pressure. But from June onwards this has changed and they are now on the offensive. Take for example Urgun and the streets of Kandahar.

One weakness of the Mujahideen, or should I say where they are not strong, is that they are not very cen-

tralised. At the front it is also very much a matter of the personality of the individual commanders and so it is very difficult to replace some of those who have been killed. But the commanders have deputies who would take over in the event of their death.

I think that in the coming year the Mujahideen will be aiming, depending on the supply of weapons, to attack the Soviet military bases. They have become aware that it is necessary to shift their attention from attacking small government posts to more important objectives.



Photo: P. Jouvenal

**Nawab Salim, Spokesman for Hisbe Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar)**

The Mujahideen are on the offensive. We have made several attacks during the past year, the major targets being Soviet posts and convoys.

Although civilians have been forced to leave many areas due to Soviet military activity, those that

remain help the Mujahideen in any way that they can, and this year the food situation is better.

Hisbe Islami is the only party to give strategy from Peshawar. Other parties issue general guidelines but our Mujahideen must act on the planned strategy issued from

Peshawar.

The war intensified last winter, forcing the Mujahideen to remain and defend their bases. I feel that the coming year will be the most active for our fighters.

**Representatives of the Mujahideen Resistance were invited to give their views on the progress of the war. The two party spokesmen and Professor Majrooh were interviewed in Peshawar. Mohammed Chakari gave a press conference at Agency Afghan Press, London, in August.**

## *Mohammed Eshaq, Spokesman for Jamiat Islami.*

The war has escalated, it has become increasingly difficult over the last seven years, but still the Mujahideen are able to control a vast area of the country and a large percentage of the population. The Mujahideen's ability to fight has also increased.

As far as the individual areas are concerned there has been a mixture of successes and failures. In some areas the Mujahideen have become better organised, better armed and better trained. But in other areas, because of the terrain and historical problems, the Mujahideen have not been able to take control of the land or the people. At the same time they have not suffered as much as they could have. This is not due to a lack of the will to fight or of popular support, but is due to the type of organisation working in the area, which takes its local and traditional colour, and sometimes is not capable of dealing with the situation. In between these

examples are a mixture of the two extremes; it is a spectrum. The success or otherwise of any resistance group depends on a number of factors.

The Mujahideen have tried to take a number of objectives, the whole idea being to liberate Afghanistan. These objectives depend on their ability on the ground. Defending a city against armoured vehicles and aircraft is not an easy job, and because of this there have been problems in keeping a hold on the cities and towns. The enemy is trying to hold the cities and roads, but the Mujahideen are not yet at the stage where they are able to capture, and more important, to keep them. They may threaten a city, but at the same time the Mujahideen are very careful not to increase casualties among the civilians. There are some cities which are half under the control of

the Mujahideen, for example, Kandahar and Herat.

The Mujahideen have abandoned positional warfare and are now primarily involved in fighting a guerrilla war. This does not apply to all of Afghanistan, but there have been improvements.

The information and propaganda effort is important not only to inform the outside world but also the people inside Afghanistan. Apart from anything else we have to compete against an increasingly effective Soviet propaganda campaign.

Civilian support is important. Earlier in the war and in many areas today, the Mujahideen rely on the civilians for food and shelter. However, in some areas the civilians are now internal refugees with no means of support, and these people now look to the Mujahideen for help.



## *Commander Mohammed Siddique Chakari*

Chakari gave a press conference on 14 August in London. He commands 5000 Mujahideen in three Kabul districts: Charasyab, Sarobi and Bagrami. The Mujahideen are now fighting inside Kabul and in the homes of pro-Russian Afghans, although previously we stayed in the mountains. The Russians have suffered great losses, but the Afghan people have made even greater sacrifice of their lives. But the Mujahideen have not retaliated in kind for Russian atrocities against women and children.

'There are great numbers of internal refugees. We now have a number of administrative committees for finance, judicial affairs (for the local population), mobilization, that is jihad and education: jihad is now taught as a subject in our schools for refugees. As we have no doctors our medical committee is

not active.

The fighters are in 93 groups organised into 4 battalions, each with its own centre. The main headquarters coordinates operations, and there is sometimes a big attack using all groups together.

'In Kabul the Russians do not venture out after 8 pm, and the Mujahideen have it to themselves until dawn next day. In the countryside, Russian tactics have developed: first they used tanks, then they tried infantry; then they tried parachute commandos behind Mujahideen lines. They also mine heavily round their forts. They use delayed action fuses of up to 24 hours on their bombs, which are now dropped from much higher altitudes. Bombardments in Paktia were so severe that caves up to 20 metres deep were destroyed.

'The Mujahideen have no mis-

siles: that was American propaganda to pressure us. We bought one SAM 7 on the black market, but it was a failure.

'I do not think Western press coverage is very helpful, they keep saying we are split. But the differences that you see outside Afghanistan do not spoil our co-operation within the country when we fight together.'

'In Paktia last year three of my groups went to fight. 90 Mujahideen were killed and 300 injured, but the Russians suffered over 400 casualties. The Russians try their prisoners and have buried some alive: we have punished some who are guilty of crimes: otherwise we offer them Islam; it is up to them.'

'The Iranians only help the Shi'a groups.'

(Based on interpretation).

# NORTH CAUCASUS — A PRECEDENT FOR AFGHANISTAN?

by Marie Broxup

(Explanatory note: a number of terms in the following article need further elaboration for the non-specialist reader. Please see the box below for details — Ed.)

Soon after the Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks were still consolidating their power, they were faced with two major Muslim uprisings: the Basmachi war in Turkestan which lasted from 1918 to 1928, and the North Caucasus uprising in Daghestan and Chechnia in 1920–1921. Both wars went practically unnoticed in the West. Since the invasion of Afghanistan the Basmachi war has become a major theme of Soviet Central Asian propaganda. The message is very simple: 'We (the Russians) have defeated Muslim rebels before, so it is only a matter of time before we crush the Afghan *mujahideen*'. But similarities between the two wars are few.

All mention of the North Caucasian uprising of 1920, on the other hand, has been forbidden by the Soviet censors since 1927. This is probably because comparisons do spring to mind between the Afghan *mujahideen* and the *ghazis* of North Caucasus, whereas the Basmachi struggle never took on the character of a real national and religious war.

Both Afghanistan and the North Caucasus have a long tradition of *jihad*: Russian Turkestan lacks this. The Basmachis had no clear idea of national identity: when repression, political purges and the anti-Islamic campaign began in 1928, no military or political opposition was left in Turkestan. This primarily 'political' success explains why the Soviets are

at pains to compare the Afghan war to the Basmachi war, and to try to steer attention away from the North Caucasus uprising.

### The Beginnings of Caucasian Resistance

*Jihad* was first preached in the North Caucasus by a Chechen Naqshbandi, Sheikh Mansur of Ushurma, in 1783. For several years he managed to unite most of the North-eastern Caucasus in the holy war against the Russians, who found it hard going: their best troops were held at bay for many years by a bunch of under-privileged mountaineers, and they suffered a major defeat at the Sunzha River, where an entire brigade was lost. Sheikh Mansur was captured in 1791 and died in prison two years later. Repression was extremely severe, and it was not until the early 1820s that *jihad* was again called, by another Naqshbandi, Sheikh Ismail of Kurdemir.

Henceforth the history of the North Caucasus is a continuous and epic struggle by the mountaineers against Russian conquest, and Shamil's *ghazawat* (fight against the infidel) from 1824 to 1859 was the longest resistance of any Muslim nation against a foreign invader: it became an inspiration for all national liberation movements in the Russian Empire. Less than 20 years after Shamil's surrender, in 1877 Daghestan and Chechnia were again

ablaze: all leaders not killed in battle were hanged, and thousands deported to Siberia, yet North Caucasus remained insecure.

From the holy war of Sheikh Mansur up to the Revolution, it was the same Naqshbandi sect or *tariqa* which led resistance to the Russians, providing all the leaders and the majority of fighters. The Qadiriya which took an active part in the 1877–1878 rebellion was obliged to model its activity on the Naqshbandiya. (Because of their role in armed resistance against the infidel invader these two *tariqa* represented the militant radical trend in Islam contrary to the 'liberal' and quietist character they assumed in most of the Muslim world, comparable perhaps more to the 'fundamentalist' parties of the Afghan resistance).

Russian 'pacification' of North Caucasus from Ermolov's governorship in 1816 onwards compares with Soviet army policy in Afghanistan: the same indiscriminate massacres, burnings, atrocities, fouling of mosques and so on. A Russian author (Zubov) writing in 1834 was already suggesting that the best way of dealing with the intractable Chechens, who then numbered only some 5000 fighters, was simply to 'eliminate' the whole population.

### Resistance under the Soviets

In 1920 the final tragic battle between a purely Russian Red Army

**Glossary:** Apart from the word-list below, the *Naqshbandi* and the *Qadiriya* need a special footnote. Both are sects or brotherhoods (*tariqa*) of Sufic Islam. They are traditional spiritual and teaching orders whose leadership is handed on by descent, the *Qadiriya* from Abdul *Qadir Gailani* of the 12th Century (whose tomb is at Bagdad), and the *Naqshbandi* or *Naqshbandiya* from Baha'uddin *Naqshband* (Bokhara, 1318–1389). The *Naqshbandi* tended to play a more political role (in Afghanistan through the Mojaddidi family of the Shor Bazar), than the *Qadiriya* led by Pir Gailani, at least until recently. Word-list:

<i>adat:</i>	custom
<i>bidin:</i>	atheistic
<i>ghazi: ghazawat:</i>	warrior for Islam and his campaign
<i>imam: imamat:</i>	religious leader (esp. among Shi'a) and his rule
<i>jihad:</i>	holy war
<i>murid: murshid:</i>	(respectively) pupil and teacher in a <i>tariqa</i>
<i>tariqa:</i>	order, sect or brotherhood, usually of Sufi spiritual/mystical branch of Islam, of which <i>Qadiriya</i> and <i>Naqshbandi</i> (see above) are two of the earliest.



and the 'fundamentalist' Muslims, led once again by the Naqshbandi *tariqa*, followed hard on the confused and ferocious civil war period from 1917 to 1920. The political and spiritual leader of the rebellion was an Avar Najmuddin of Hotso (Gotsinski), elected Imam of Daghestan and Chechnia in 1917, and its inspiration was Sheikh Uzun Haji, a Chechen, both Naqshbandi *mursids* (teachers). (The nominal leader was Sayid Beg — Shamil's grandson — who came to Daghestan from Turkey). The aim of the rebels was to expel the Russians, establish a theocratic state, and liquidate the 'bad Muslims' who had allied themselves to the Russians.

Uzun Haji died at the age of 90 in May 1920, a couple of months before the outbreak of the rebellion he inspired. He had spent the major part of his life in Siberian camps. Released in February 1917, he returned to North Caucasus and immediately took arms to fight against all Russians — Reds and Whites — whom he hated equally. In 1919 he founded a theocratic state in upper Chechnia on the model of Shamil's *imamat* called 'the Emirate of North Caucasus'.

In the spring of 1920 the 11th Red



Gotsinski's HQ (1919):  
(1) Najmuddin  
Gotsinski  
(2) Uzun Haji  
(3) Halilov  
— courtesy  
Marie Broxup &  
Librairie Geuthner.

Army occupied the lowlands of Daghestan. Samurskii (a Muslim communist, First Secretary of the Party in Daghestan) acknowledged that 'several mistakes': plunderings, atrocities and attacks on Islam — were committed. Three months later the whole of upper Daghestan and Chechnia were in revolt.

Samurskii wrote about the clerics who led the rebellion:

*'These men . . . were among the most famous scholars of the entire Muslim world . . . Thousands of disciples from all Muslim lands, from*

*Russia, Turkey, Persia, used to visit them . . . They were hallowed by the authority of a deep learning and their words were as sacred as the laws . . . but at the same time they belonged to the people . . . They were armed with the same sword and rifle and in battle they were the leaders fighting in the forefront; they were the bearers of a certain democracy, based on the support of the poorest and the weakest, which was the very essence of Shamil's rule; they were 'the defenders of national independence . . .'*

### 'Panjshir' Tactics

The rebels were not numerous: the number of fighters under arms was estimated at 9,600, but — unlike the Basmachis, who were often part-time fighters — they had an embryonic 'regular army' permanently mobilized, of clansmen whose gallantry and fighting spirit were acknowledged by their opponents such as Samurskii. They were armed with antique rifles and swords, had very little ammunition, and only 40 machine-guns which they had captured in battle. Their tactics were not dissimilar to those of Ahmed Shah Massoud in the Panjshir valley 60 years later: no hit and run operations, but attacks against Soviet garrisons and ambush of important Red Army columns in narrow valleys. They were highly effective and the Red Army suffered some spectacular defeats: in the Arakan valley in October 1920 a rifle regiment and an artillery unit of two batteries were destroyed to the last man. One month later the Soviet First Model 'Revolutionary Discipline' Rifle Regiment was surprised in a high mountain pass and cut down (the few survivors were left naked to freeze to death). In Janu-

ary 1921 another (cavalry) regiment and a rifle battalion were surrounded in upper Chechnia and destroyed.

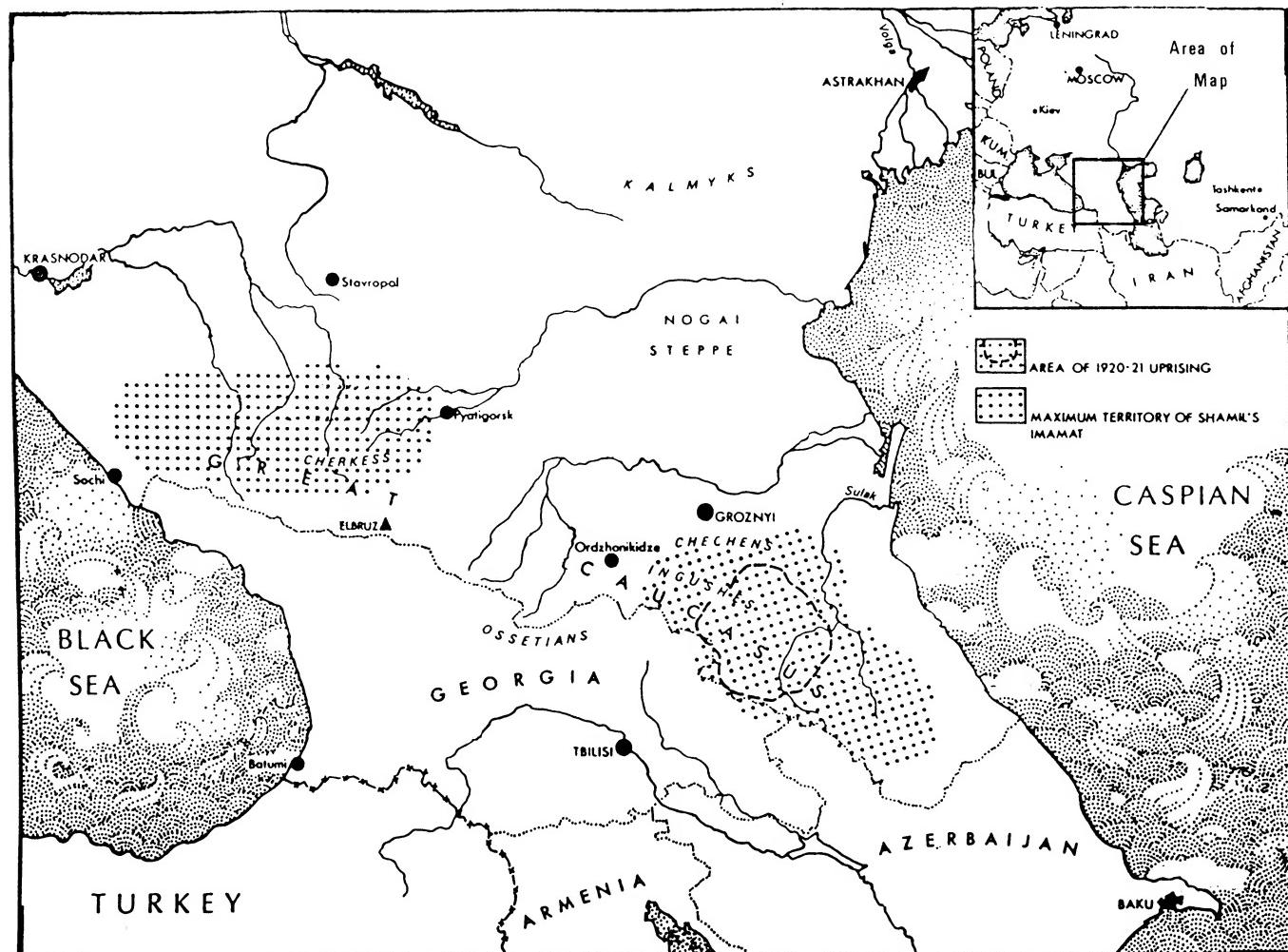
To quell the rebellion the Bolsheviks deployed two armies: 27 rifle regiments, 6 cavalry regiments, 6 artillery groups, 2 special Inner Security battalions, and special formations: aviation, armoured cars, and Moscow and local Cheka units — altogether some 40,000 fighters — hardened veterans of the Russian civil war to whom the Soviet conscripts in Afghanistan bear little resemblance.

### No Compromise

At first the Red Army mounted large expeditions, with disastrous results. In 1921 the Soviet command reverted to the tactics used successfully by Baryatinski against Shamil a century before, but with much greater ruthlessness: one valley after another was occupied, and the civilian population systematically massacred or deported. The Red Army pushed the rebels back into the remotest mountain areas and destroyed them in battle: unlike the *mujahideen* they had no refuge: Daghestan and Chechnia were iso-

lated — Azerbaijan had been conquered by the Red Army in 1920 — and the only free border was with Georgia, a traditional enemy. The freedom-fighters received no help from outside.

All the North Caucasian wars were *jihad* against the infidels: Tsarist Russia, then Denikin (1918–1919), and finally the Bolsheviks. Russian Bolsheviks were simply judged worse than their predecessors for being *bidin* (atheists): the Caucasian *ghazis* understood this in 1920 as well as the *mujahideen* of today. Contrary to Soviet propaganda, the Caucasian *murids* were neither stupid nor fanatical reactionaries, nor did their leaders such as Shamil and Uzun Haji look back or wish to restore the past. (Shamil's struggle against the Daghestani feudal nobility and his replacement of *adat* (custom) by the Shariat law — a more modern concept — best illustrates this). They wanted a theocratic Shariat state: today, with our experience of the Iranian revolution, it could be appropriate to call them 'revolutionaries'. Similarly the Afghan *mujahideen* — at least the fundamentalist groups — often refer to their struggle in terms of 'Islamic



revolution'.

Liberal nationalist opposition to the Soviets had already collapsed by 1920 throughout the Muslim territories: contrary to what is happening in Afghanistan, where at least 90 per cent of the population backs the resistance, the North Caucasian mountaineers were an exception among the Muslims of Russia. They alone understood that compromise with the Bolsheviks was not possible, and history was to prove them right. But at the time other solutions still appeared possible to other Muslim leaders for the liberation of their people, such as a national Muslim way to communism. Muslim communist leaders, like Samurskii (later executed as a 'traitor' by Stalin), Sultan-Galiev and many others were authentic patriots and could appear, then, as realists. Today nobody could mistake Babrak Karimai for a patriot or realist.

#### **Aftermath: Attempted Genocide**

In 1921 the Soviet military victory in North Caucasus was total: there were no rebels left, and terrible repression followed. However, military success alone was not enough: in the Caucasus the Soviets failed to gain the political upper hand they so brilliantly won in Central Asia. The Red Army did not include any Muslim troops and advisers as it did in Central Asia, and most of the native communists who could have helped to pacify the country like their Turkmen comrades were killed before the end of the war.

The rebels had fought a war both

national and religious in character. Other rebellions soon followed: in Daghestan in 1927–1928 in reaction to the anti-religious campaign, and in autumn 1929 in the Chechen country. Fighting in Chechnia continued until spring 1930, and despite the intervention of a Red Army division, Soviet authority had to compromise for a time with a general amnesty. This however did not bring peace to the country, and the revolt was only quelled in 1936.

Two other uprisings broke out in the winter of 1940 and 1942 in Chechnia and Ingushetia. We know little of these two revolts, but they were severe enough to warrant the attempted genocide by deportation of the whole Chechen and Ingush population (including Communist Party members) to Siberia and Kazakhstan in February 1944. Some 600,000 people were involved of whom an unknown number were sent to death camps. Other North Caucasians were also deported, bringing the total to approximately 800,000, and the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was abolished. Despite the deportations, recent Soviet sources reveal that fighting continued in the higher mountains until 1947.

The attempted genocide was unsuccessful. The North Caucasians survived, and returned after Stalin's death to their homelands. Their national territories were returned to them in 1957; they have made up their loss of population — indeed, their population has almost doubled in the last 20 years. What is more,

according to Soviet sources North Caucasus is still one of the most insecure areas of the USSR.

**The Strength of the *Tariqa* continues**  
North Caucasus remains a bastion of the most intransigent 'fanatical' and 'conservative' Islam: xenophobia and an extreme nationalism prevail. Because of this, the Russian population is now leaving Daghestan and Chechnia-Ingushetia: an estimated 100,000 Russians left between 1970 and 1979.

The Sufi *tariqa* continued to take a very active part in the rebellions, including those of the 1940s which were led by former Communist Party members. Soviet sources testify that it is due to the *tariqa* that the North Caucasians managed to survive as a nation during the years of exile. Today the popularity of the *tariqa* has not faded. On the contrary, North Caucasian publications reveal what amounts to a parallel administration by the *tariqa* in religious and even civilian matters.

North Caucasus gives a remarkable example of what a refusal to die backed by strong religious feelings can achieve for small Muslim nations. If the Soviets do not find a miraculous political solution in Afghanistan they will be faced with the same situation — uninterrupted warfare for generations — the Afghans having already clearly demonstrated a similar determination.

The only difference is that there are 15 million or more Afghans instead of one million Chechens.

## **CHICKEN STREET COMES TO PESHAWAR**

*Harriet Sandys*

Chicken Street is a familiar name to anyone who has travelled to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Taking its name from the street where chickens were once bought and sold, it became famous in the late 60's and early 70's as the main bazaar where embroidered sheepskin coats, carpets, kelims, embroideries, Turkoman jewellery and hashish could be obtained. Chicken Street rapidly became a tourist trap, its colourful atmosphere attracting not only hippies and budget travellers en route for India and Kathmandu, but also wealthy tourists armed with cameras and sun hats on a two week package tour of Afghanistan.

As the demand by tourists for 'old' carpets increased, it was not an unusual sight to see newly woven carpets and rugs placed on pavements and in the road where the constant traffic backwards and forwards of cyclists, tourists, donkeys with panniers laden with fruit, hawkers and street vendors combined with the strong sunlight would artificially age the carpet. Covered in grit and dust, its bright purples and electric greens faded to a dull grey and pale green, the same carpet would be sold at a later date as a 'genuine antique' to some unsuspecting tourist!

With Soviet intervention in 1979, this lucrative tourist trade dwindled

as Afghanistan closed its borders to international tour operators and carpet dealers from the West. The sudden loss of dollars and deutschmarks spelt potential ruin to a breed of men accustomed to making fat profits from tourists — Russian roubles were no compensation. But the turbulent history of Central Asia has given the merchants a strong sense of survival. Carpet businesses are traditionally a family affair, the male members helping out with the responsibility of selling and taking a share in the profit, therefore many of the younger family members fled south to Pakistan taking with them suitcases filled with valuable but

easily transportable items such as lapis lazuli, Turkoman jewellery and embroideries and quickly found premises in the old city of Peshawar. When it was judged safe to travel, their wives and children followed.

Perhaps the last true great bazaar left in Central Asia, Peshawar once played an important role in linking the bazaars on the ancient silk route; Kashgar, Khotan, Samarkhand, Khiva and Bokhara with the towns and cities of India. Today the old city of Kissia Khawani (Bazaar of the Story-Tellers) teems with life. Faces from every corner of Afghanistan can be observed — Turkomen from the Northern Provinces of Afghanistan meander through the narrow streets, carpets slung over the shoulders, Hazaras, Tadjiks rub shoulders with Chitralis and Pathans from Pakistan's North-West Frontier. Horses and carts, their drivers standing upright reins held in one hand like Roman charioteers, career through the crowded streets narrowly missing the oncoming tongas, donkeys, sheep and goats. The incessant noise from the horns of the auto rickshaws adds to the general chaos and confusion. Above the dust and exhaust fumes, Kabuli carpet merchants gaze down from wooden balconies festooned with kelims, carpets, donkey bags and camel headresses. Exotic embroideries, Susanis from Tartary, faded by the strong sunlight can be glimpsed hanging in the dark interiors tempting the casual passer-by to climb the narrow staircase and explore further.

The war in Afghanistan has brought a considerable number of foreigners to Peshawar. Journalists, photographers as well as those connected with aid organisations venture down to the old city to browse through the variety of handicraft shops. Many an expatriate with little or no experience about Oriental carpets comes away from the bazaar certain in the knowledge that after an afternoon's hard bargaining over endless cups of green tea, he has purchased something of real value for a good price. In reality, the chances are the rug has been bought from a smooth-talking Kabuli merchant who with years of experience of dealing with tourists in Afghanistan has sized up his customer and made a 'killing'. Many carpets and rugs fetch higher prices in the bazaars of Peshawar than they would in Paris, London, Frankfurt or New York.

The Kabuli merchants tend to stock carpets, rugs, saddle bags and door

hangings made inside Afghanistan rather than the carpets woven by Turkomen refugees living in camps in Pakistan. This is because on the whole there is a greater demand for weavings which have character and are more 'nomadic' and 'tribal' in appearance. The wool used in these weavings is largely homespun and sorted and comes from the Karakul sheep, a breed indigenous to Uzbekistan in the south-west Soviet Union as well as northern Afghanistan. R.D. Parsons writes in his book **The Carpets of Afghanistan** that . . . '*the Karakul sheep has a dual fleece, which means two types of wool grow simultaneously. The outer fleece has longer staples than the soft crinkly wool of the inner fleece; both are hard wearing and lustrous and when carefully sorted and blended provide ideal wool for Afghan carpets. . .*' In the case of the old Baluch saddle bags called 'Bolesht' the selvages are usually finished with tightly woven and plaited brown goat's wool to which are attached tassels of brightly coloured beads, buttons and small cowrie shells to protect against the 'evil eye'. The loops for fastening the saddlebags are made from horse hair. Modern Baluch carpets from the south of Afghanistan and the Herat region present examples of exceptionally high quality weaving. Their muted colours of aubergine, natural brown, indigo blue/black and cream appeal to western tastes; the harmonious use of the subdued colours creating a carpet which fits naturally into the decor of a European home. Not all carpets stocked however contain good quality wool. Many on sale today in Peshawar date from the early 70's when during the catastrophic drought in Afghanistan, many non-Turkomen turned to carpet weaving. All too often pieces contain 'dead' wool, that is wool taken from the sheep after it has been slaughtered, the wool removed from the carcass in lime pits. Sold locally and cheaply in Afghanistan and often mixed with Karakul wool, the effect after dyeing produces a coarse, brittle wool with no lustre. This wool combined with aniline dyes which oxidises rapidly in sunlight into muddy colours, produces a truly horrendous result!

The incredible variety of pieces currently available in the old city of Peshawar attracts an ever increasing number of foreign buyers although one U.K. carpet buyer who is still able to visit Afghanistan, assures me that Peshawar is disappointing compared with Kabul. However, family

members left behind in Chicken Street make sure that a constant supply of new stock reaches Peshawar by lorry. While buying carpets I have often visited the same shop every day for 3 weeks because I have been promised that 'a lorry is coming soon from Afghanistan'. It is then a pleasure to sort through the newly arrived goods before the German, French and British dealers descend to clean out the shop!

I think that it would be appropriate to mention here that not all shops are owned by Kabuli merchants. In Sadar Market, Peshawar, one 5 storey concrete building is almost entirely occupied by Turkomen, refugees from the Northern Provinces. Although ethnically from tribes with a long tradition of weaving such as the Tekke, Saruq and Yamoud, many of these men would have had different occupations in Afghanistan; shop keepers, farmers etc. and the weaving of saddle bags and artefacts for the home would have been left to the women and children. Now the war has brought thousands of Turkomen to Pakistan to live in vast camps in the North-West Frontier. Many have resorted to weaving as a source of income to relieve the boredom and monotony of camp life. In Swabi camp, Barakhai district, some 2,000 families own looms in their own homes, the carpets and rugs from this camp and others flooding the Peshawar market.

With families to support in the camps, the Turkomen are desperate to sell their rugs. Many end up dealing with the middle men in Peshawar or like those in Sadar, try to compete with the Kabuli merchants. But turn-over is slow for the supply of goods exceeds the demand. Woven with bright chemical colours and poor quality machine spun wool from the mills of Lahore, the carpets are difficult to sell to Europeans although many end up in Pakistani homes or are hired by Afghans to cover the floor of tents during marriage ceremonies or special occasions.

**Harriet Sandys**

# AID TO THE AFGHAN WOUNDED

by Sir Oliver Forster

The story starts 18 months ago when Afghanaid and the Afghanistan Support Committee were asked by the Afghan Resistance to help a young commander, Mohammed Hashim, who had been hit in the arm by a bullet from a Soviet helicopter, damaging the nerves and rendering his right hand useless. The delicate surgery required could not be performed in Pakistan. Hashim was operated on by a leading London surgeon, the nerves were repaired and his hand was restored to full use; he returned at once to Peshawar.

As a result of this success, we were asked late in 1985 whether we could help with three other cases requiring sophisticated surgery. We did not

have the money to pay for the hospital beds but a personal appeal to the Prime Minister resulted in a grant from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and we were able to go ahead.

Mr Ian Todd, now President of the Royal College of Surgeons, assembled a team of top surgeons and consultants who were willing to give their services free. Pakistan International Airlines provided free air tickets, and members of the Afghan community in London, with help from Muslim Aid, a charity set up by the pop-singer Cat Stevens, volunteered to accommodate and look after the patients when they were not in hospital. We could not get free NHS hospital beds and the

cases had to be treated as private patients, which is very expensive, but the Foreign Office grant was designed to cover this.

The Afghanaid Representative in Peshawar went round the refugee hospitals there and collected details of 26 cases all of whom needed surgery which could not be provided in Pakistan. With the advice of our team of surgeons we selected eight, all the money would run to, and brought them to England. All eight were successfully treated and six have now returned to Pakistan, restored to health; the other two will be going back shortly.

The most difficult of the eight cases and the one which has had some publicity in the Press was Mohammed Zazai. He was a fourteen year-old boy who had been severely wounded in a Soviet bombing raid on his village near Jalalabad. His father had been killed and his uncle, Said Rahim, the sole surviving adult male in the family, had brought Zazai, his mother and three small sisters across the mountains into Pakistan. Zazai had a fractured pelvis and fearful internal injuries. He was flown to this country as a stretcher case; he was in great pain and was described by the surgeon on arrival as "a frightened, ill-nourished, septic child, totally withdrawn". With the help of private donations, we flew the uncle Said Rahim to this country to be with him and to keep up his spirits. After an initial operation, his strength had to be built up over several months before major surgery could be undertaken. The nature of the internal injuries were such that this had to be performed by the leading urologist in the country who did three operations and managed to repair all the bowel injuries. Unfortunately the orthopaedic surgeons and a course of physiotherapy could not fully repair the fractured pelvis and an arthritic hip. Zazai can now get about on crutches and will probably always need them. But he is alive, back with his mother and family in Peshawar and with a much improved quality of life to look forward to.

The other cases were not so dramatic in that they were not matters of life and death, but in each case if the surgery had not been done, the victims would have been



Zazai and his uncle — courtesy Daily Mail.

left permanently crippled. The worst damage was probably suffered by Rahim Jan, who was injured in a mine blast, losing both hands and an eye with the other eye damaged. He had been fitted with artificial hands, which he is now learning to use, and an artificial eye. The surgeons decided that it was too dangerous to operate on the remaining eye but he has a fair degree of vision in it and there is a good chance that he will retain this.

Then there were three patients with facial injuries — Zarif Khan, a fifteen year-old boy whose jaw was completely locked, Abdul Hafiz, who had most of his jaw shot away, and Mohammed Shah, who had lost his nose and was having breathing difficulties. All three required a series of complex grafting operations from top plastic and maxillo-facial surgeons. All have been restored to as near normal as is possi-

ble after such severe injuries. Zarif Khan has had a new jaw restored after skin and bone grafts. Mohammed Shah's nose has been rebuilt after a series of grafts; he is much dissatisfied with it and obviously expected that his former nose would be completely restored but it is not at all a bad nose and no doubt he will come to accept it in time.

Two cases — Dur Mohammed and Abdul Bashir — had each been hit in the right arm by bullets and had lost the use of their right hands. Nerve and tendon surgery has restored almost complete use of their hands and time will complete the cure.

These were only eight wounded Afghans out of many more in Pakistan and Afghanistan who need complicated surgery to save their lives or to prevent them from being left permanently crippled. But even with so many people giving their services

free, it is still an expensive business. Mohammed Zazai alone used up all the Foreign Office grant and we are still trying to raise the money to meet the other bills. To take any more cases would require a substantial source of funds — about £1,000 for each patient for each week spent in hospital. However, despite the financial difficulties, it has all been worthwhile. Eight Afghans have been restored to health and can, we hope, play a positive part in the liberation of their country.

**STOP PRESS:** We have just heard from Peshawar that Mohammed Zazai — now back with his delighted family — has been found a school place, and there is even a plan to get him a bicycle. Although it hardly seems possible that Zazai could ride one, the orthopaedic surgeons are agreed that it is the best exercise for his condition.

## DAME FREYA STARK: THE ENDURING HEART *A review of 'The Minaret of Djam'*

by Anthony Freemantle

Dame Freya is a traveller of great experience and formidable technical accomplishment. She endures, but does not revel in, discomfort and alleviates it whenever possible. Her kit is of distinctly fine quality; a jar of Horlicks, a pre-war Leica, Henry Maxwell shoes (exquisite) and a five-pound note for emergencies.\* She long ago realized that you must get drinking water from as close to its source as possible. Her encounters are always vividly set down and usually valuable for she talks (in this case to two Afghan ladies) of 'important things — children, food, health, religion and the indestructibly stimulating topic of clothes'.

She has, in the phrase of her hunting ancestors, a nailing fine eye for country. Nothing in all of this would necessarily distinguish her from those scores of English gentlewomen who, for almost two centuries, have trundled the more spectacularly inhospitable regions of the world quelling the whims and demands of banditti, dragomen, provincial governors, policemen and crazed mullahs with an invincible courtesy that imperfectly veiled amazing resources of common sense and determination.† Nonetheless

Dame Freya does stand alone in this sorority in virtue of her great distinction of mind, eye and heart; her capacity for sustained wise reflection on what she has seen and read; and for her sense of history and the ebb and flow of time in landscape as in human affairs. She is a realist: for her, acceptance of the facts of time and change is the root of understanding.

As, on her journeys, she travels up stream to find the purest water, so in her writings she has always returned to her sources: to the great travellers and historians of the ancient world and to the facts of her own experience and cogitations; no more *truthful* writer has written in this century.

And Dame Freya, we must remind ourselves, has been writing for the greater part of this century; the earliest piece I have seen dates from 1919. In nineteenth century terms this is as if Byron had lived on from Waterloo to see the earliest motor-car; and Dame Freya has herself written, to a fine evocative effect, of youthful jaunts in dog-carts, governess carriages, landaus and hansom cabs. She is a member of that select group of writers who

have written on from youth to extreme old age: Somerset Maugham, Bernard Shaw and Sacheverell Sitwell, all of whom had writing careers of upwards of sixty-five years. But unlike them, for whom the writing of one decade is pretty well interchangeable with the writing of any other, early or late, Dame Freya's writing shows the unmistakeable marks of pilgrimage: 'What we know, too, is added to what we see: the landscape that in Europe ends with the North Sea or Mediterranean just over the brow of a hill, here stretches along the great silk road to China, with names of wayside halts that have accumulated magic through the ages, Louland or Khotan, Samarkand, Bukhara . . . . Names merely, you will say, but such as the pearl master works on, encrusting its shred of grit with light; and it is this recurrent sweep of distance and time, strokes of days unconsciously recorded, unconsciously noted, stray travellers' or poets' words thrown casually, which like the jeweller's hammer beat out the jewel's unnumbered facets into some lonely but complicated climax of perfection — not landscape only

but time and change, rise and decline of nations, all welded into the traveller's moment as he passes, enriched beyond his stride'.<sup>§</sup> Of the three writers earlier mentioned two, Sacheverell Sitwell and Somerset Maugham, were great travellers; but Dame Freya is an authentic nomad — her wisdom is that of the road not the study and it is embodied in a style unrivalled since Ruskin or Landor although, unlike them, her effects whilst often lapidary are never marmoreal.



Dame Freya Stark — photo courtesy John Murray

This may, in part, derive from the influence of her mentor W.P. Ker (1855–1923), 'by general recognition one of the great scholars of his own or any age'. There was hardly an important (and no great number of unimportant) work in European literature from Homer to Swinburne which he had not read in the language in which it was written. His books [*Epic and Romance*], [*The Dark Ages*], [*English Literature: Mediaeval*] and the [*Collected Essays*] are still unrivaled as introductions to their subjects. He wrote

an English of beautiful limpidity. Ker in a sentence can show us that 'the latin author has no contemporaries. He is a fellow worker along with Cicero and St. Augustine, and ought to be satisfied with that'. By his use of William Blake's definition of an '*angelic work*' he has docketed Boethius's *'Consolation of Philosophy'* comfortably, so that there is no surprise, only delight, to trace it in the last phrase of Dante's *'Paradiso'*, Shakespeare's *'Hamlet'* and Milton's *'Lycidas'*. Ker's work

demonstration of this than a late work of Dame Freya's *'The Minaret of Djam'*, modestly described as 'An Excursion in Afghanistan'. It is also an admirable introduction to her writing for those who still have the great treat of reading it for the first time; it epitomizes in little one of her own rules: 'a pattern is required, and the threads of the world are there for the artist's weaving'. The book (written in 1969) says in its dedication, 'In twenty years, or ten perhaps, these adventures will seem nearer to the Dark Ages than to the Space Age and their memory will be that of the antique'. This remark now seems to be of positively sybilline prescience and leaves one with the strong feeling that the Foreign Office should be urged to maintain a permanent Minister Resident at Asolo as being the most sensible listening post for Asia and the Middle East (the present writer puts himself at the head of the queue). It is a journey told with great insight and humour: one wonders whether the charitably unnamed psychologist has ever presented himself in decent society since. And one paragraph, as it were a phrase in music, subsumes much of what Dame Freya has to tell us and provides, in its lucid cadences, a reason for listening to her message; 'But the fortunate civilizations are those that follow their own spoke along the wheel of time and move through the ever-widening perimeters to their own portion of the general horizon; their tradition — like every tradition good or bad — is never static, but through every necessary deviation will keep its own direction — the arrow from the bow; and in the magnanimity which this world requires, will continue to produce the hero with indispensable care. For his quality which in the Arab horse is known as 'the enduring heart', is essential for free survival. It is, I believe, the strongest force known in human life — the only one that can perhaps stand up to the atomic age.'

In an age when public utterances, always grossly expressed, seem compounded of half-demented vindictiveness and self-pity this lucid and generous passage seems worth attending to: we need Dame Freya's 'enduring heart'.

provides a landscape, not a lexicon, and this, I think, is what he bequeathed to the young Freya Stark.

Certainly his definition of his own critical method applies (*mutatis mutandis*) to her work: 'Not to confound things different; to reckon every author as one individual with his own story to tell, his own individual manner, his own value — that is the essence of it. Not to judge abstractly, but to see concretely is the end aim of it.'

And there can be no better

\* This refers to travels in 1968.

† One recalls a recent ambassador in Beirut who, in an unhelpful summer rain of bullets, mortars and missiles, donned a tin hat and a flak jacket and got on with the dead-heading.

§ From *'The Minaret of Djam'*, John Murray 1970.

# AFGHAN FOOD AND COOKERY

## NOSHE DJAN

Helen  
Saberi

*Reviewed by Rosemarie Clancy*

Afghan food and cookery reflects the many different cultural and geographical influences that make up Afghanistan today. Afghanistan is the meeting point of four major cultural influences: the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East. The many different peoples living in that country have counterparts as far afield as Turkey and China, and similarities with food from the Middle East, Persia, India and Tibet can be found in Afghan food.

For the past two thousand years merchants and armies have passed through the land that is now Afghanistan and many have left



their mark on present-day Afghan culture. Genghis Khan passed through with his Mongol armies in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as did his descendant Babur, founder of the Moghul Empire in India. It was also a crossroads of the ancient Silk routes, travelled by Marco Polo in the fifteenth century,

connecting Europe with India and the Far East.

In the North the snows of the vast mountain range, the Hindu Kush, produce fertile valleys and green plains in which cotton and cereal crops are cultivated and yet farther south there are huge and barren deserts. The varied climate enables a range of fruit to be grown including grapes and melons, for which Afghanistan is famous.



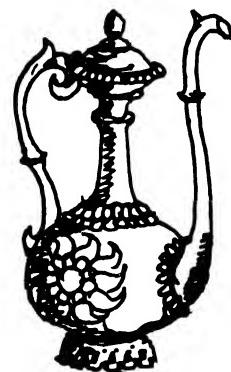
AWANG

The author, Helen Saberi, is English and lived in Afghanistan for ten years, marrying into an Afghan family. She learnt at first hand how to cook Afghan food and then decided, having returned to England, to put together a collection of recipes for cooks in Britain to try out and enjoy. The result is *Noshe Djan – Afghan Food and Cookery*.

The writer's deep feeling for the country and its people is evident throughout the book, especially in the full introduction where she

explains Afghan social customs and the preparation of the food, drawing attention to the traditions of religious festivals when special meals and sweets are prepared. Sherbets and sugared almonds feature in the wedding ceremony and on the safe return of a relative from a journey or from illness special dishes are prepared and distributed to the poor.

Central to the Afghan way of life is the drinking of chai or tea. Those sharing the meal that follows sit on large colourful cushions, perhaps with a blanket thrown over a charcoal brazier keeping their legs warm, around a platter of rice. The accompanying dishes may be flavoured with yoghurt and a whole variety of



spices or fruit and are served with vegetables, nan bread and home made chutneys. Tea is then served again after the meal.

The Afghan cook uses simple pots, pans and crockery so that the average British kitchen should contain the necessary utensils. The traditional Afghan way of crushing garlic and grinding spices with a brass pestle and mortar is more easily achieved with modern machines.

Main meals, vegetable dishes and desserts are treated in separate sections, as are bread, pickles and chutneys, and kebabs. There is both an index and a useful table of measures at the end of the book. All the ingredients are available at any large supermarket.

The book is attractively illustrated



with drawings depicting various aspects of the Afghan way of life. Helen Saberi is a gifted cookery writer who inspires her readers to try her recipes again and again. Below are two that I have tried and found quite delicious!



#### *Qabili Pilau Uzbeki*

(Uzbek rice with carrots and raisins)

1lb (450 g) long grain rice, preferably basmati  
4 fl oz (110 ml) vegetable oil  
2 medium onions, chopped  
1½–2lbs (700–900 g) lamb on the bone or  
1 chicken, cut in pieces  
water  
2 large carrots  
4 oz (110 g) raisins  
1 tsp black pepper  
2 tsp cumin  
salt

Rinse the rice several times until the water remains clear, then leave it to soak in fresh water for at least half an hour.

Heat the oil in a flame-proof casserole over a medium to high heat and add the chopped onions. Fry until golden brown and soft. Add the meat (if lamb, trimmed of excess fat) and fry until well browned. Then add enough water to cover the meat and salt, bring to the boil, and turn down the heat and cook gently until the meat is tender.

While the meat is cooking, wash, peel and cut up the carrots into pieces like matchsticks.

When the meat is done and you are ready to cook the rice, add the carrots and the raisins to the top of the meat, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon each of cumin and black pepper, and salt.

Drain the rice, place it on top of the carrots and raisins and add enough water to cover it by about ½ inch (1 cm). Add the other teaspoon of cumin and a little salt, bring to the boil, turn down the heat, cover, and boil gently for about 10 minutes until the rice is tender and the water absorbed. It is important that you listen carefully while cooking this rice for a ticking noise. When you hear it, remove the pan immediately from the heat. Place the casserole, which should have a tightly fitting lid, in a preheated oven at 150 °C (300 °F, mark 2) for about 45 minutes. Or you can finish the cooking by leaving it over a very low heat.

Chaka, which is an alternative to yoghurt suggested in the following recipe, is in fact Afghan yoghurt which has been strained to produce a thick, creamy substance.



#### *Bonjon-e-Buranee*

(Aubergines with yoghurt)

1lb (450 g) aubergines  
8 fl oz (225 ml) vegetable oil  
15 fl oz (425 ml) chaka or strained yoghurt  
4 oz (110 g) tomatoes  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 cloves of garlic peeled and crushed  
2 tsp dried mint  
¼ tsp red pepper  
salt

Wash and peel the aubergines, slice them into rounds ¼–½ inch (5 mm–1 cm) thick, spread them out on a board or plate, sprinkle them with salt to draw out some of the water and any bitterness, and allow to stand for 15–30 minutes. Rinse and then wipe dry with a clean cloth or kitchen paper.

Heat the vegetable oil in a frying-pan and fry as many slices of the aubergines as possible in one layer. Fry on both sides until brown. Remove from the pan, shake off excess oil and put to one side. Repeat with the remaining aubergines, adding more oil as necessary.

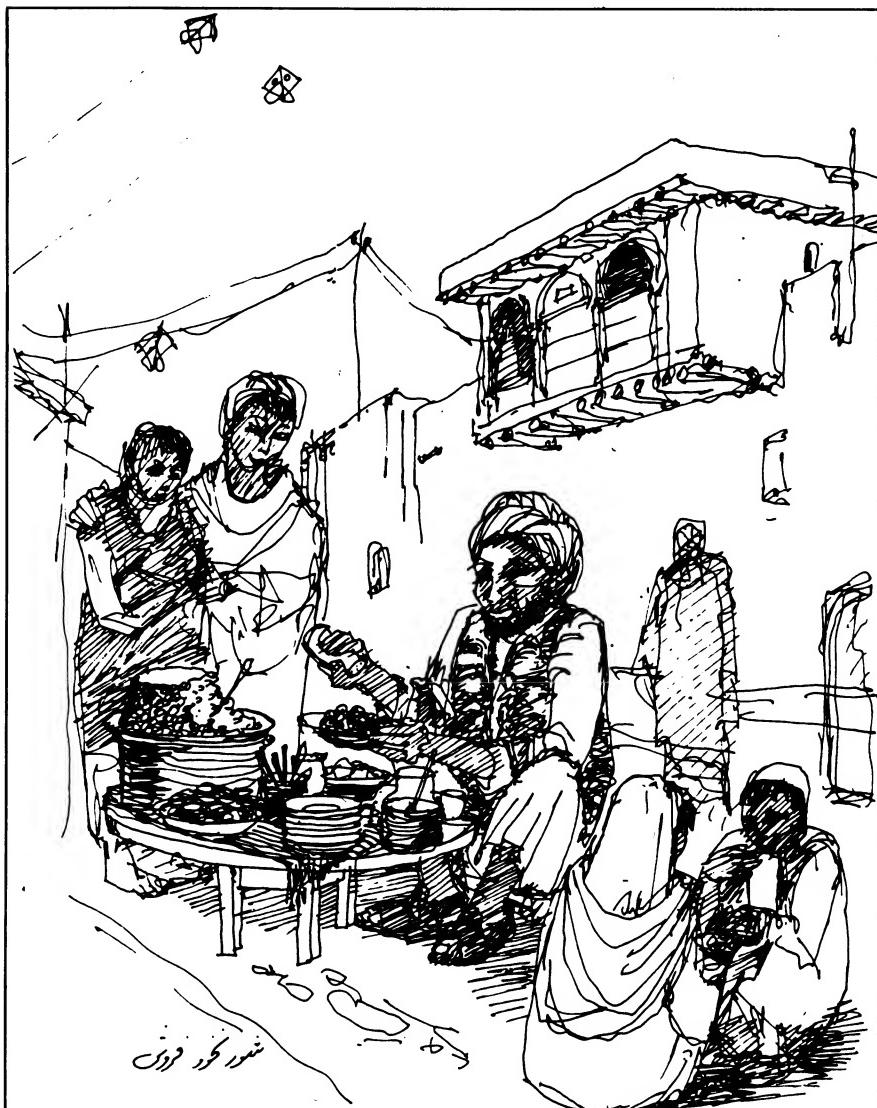
(Aubergines soak up a lot of oil).

Fry the chopped onions in the remaining oil until reddish-brown. Slice the tomatoes. Arrange the aubergines, tomatoes and onions in layers in a pan, sprinkling with a little salt and red pepper. Add 2–3 tablespoons of water, cover the pan with a lid, and simmer over a low heat for 40–50 minutes, adding a little more if necessary. The sauce should be thick, not watery. Spoon off excess oil.



Meanwhile, combine the strained yoghurt (or chaka), the crushed garlic, a little salt and the dried mint.

Put half of the strained yoghurt on to a warm serving dish. Carefully remove the aubergines from the pan with a fish slice, and arrange them on the yoghurt. Top with the rest of the yoghurt and any remaining sauce from the aubergines. Serve immediately.



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# BRITS IN AFGHANISTAN

## PEREGRINE HODSON

by James Henderson

Peregrine Hodson, author of 'UNDER A SICKLE MOON', to be published later this year by Century Hutchinson, talks to James Henderson about a journey he made to Afghanistan in 1984.

"I was in Kyoto when the invasion took place and it was then that I decided that I wanted to go to Afghanistan. I had studied Persian at Oxford and this had given me a certain understanding of the people, but at this stage I did not have any clear idea of what I could do. As it gradually became obvious that the war in Afghanistan would continue for some time, I made up my mind that I would make a journey."

Four years on, and slightly fed up with his Law books Peregrine Hodson looked into the possibility of writing articles on an aspect of the war that he felt was under-reported. He decided on a series of articles about 'the People's War'. "It is terrible that the people of Afghanistan should be messed around by the Russians in this manner and I felt that this was being ignored in favour of 'bang-bang' scenes with the Mujahideen, and that these were reinforcing the image people have here of the plucky Mujahideen in a David and Goliath struggle. This detracts, I believe, from an equally important and much less romantic struggle, that is the struggle of the Afghan people to survive and to preserve their culture and independence. And because the sight of aeroplanes bombing houses looks very much the same all over the world, I wanted to try and see it on the ground so as to understand the situation as clearly as possible. With all the coverage of the Mujahideen I felt I wanted to remind people of other aspects of the war and that is that the Russians are actually bombing Afghan villages."

He visited the Paris offices of Jamiat-i-Islami and made the contacts he needed for the journey. By good fortune when he reached Pakistan there was a group of Mujahideen setting off for the town

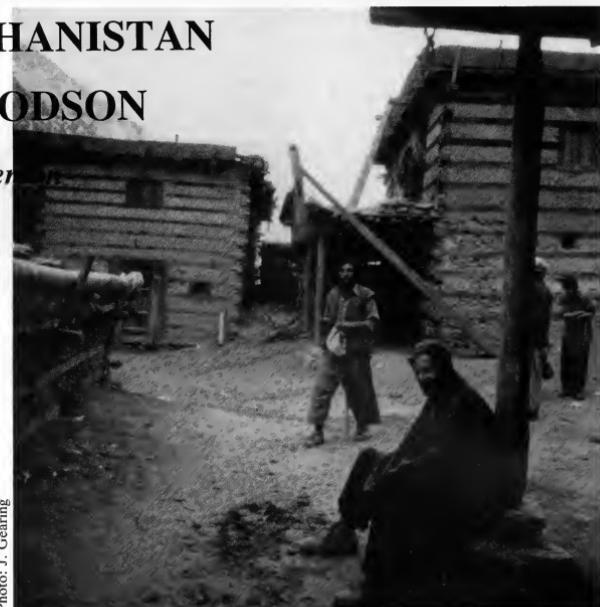


Photo: J. Gearing

of Nahrin ten days after his arrival. "Crossing the Durand Line into Afghanistan brought a sense of relief, finally to accomplish what had been planned on and off for four years. It was a wonderful feeling."

The countryside was to live up to his expectations, and he was to travel through the mountainous areas of the Hindu Kush and Nuristan. "Some of it was barren and dry and other parts were very beautiful, but the walking was also tougher than I had thought. I think that walking through Afghanistan, rather than travelling by bus or by plane you realise that to some extent the country shapes the character of the people. For instance, climbing mountains requires endurance and patience and this I can see very clearly in the people's struggle."

The journey to Nahrin took approximately three weeks, but after about ten days the supply caravan in which he was travelling was ambushed by another group of Mujahideen and all the arms were lost. "Three other members of the ambushed party and I were then taken off in a truck, to where we did not know, but when we arrived we found that the elders of the village were apologetic and we were fed chai and warm nan and looked after until the rest of the party caught up."

It seems that the local commander had acted on his own initiative in

robbing the convoy of their weapons and the elders were very disapproving. After ten days of arduous travelling on the way to their own village, and with several more days and one dangerous river crossing near Pul-e-Khumri ahead, the convoy was naturally let down.

As it turned out the party was forced to cross this river with just one Kalashnikov rifle. The approach to Pul-e-Khumri is lined with gorges but the garrison itself stands in a wide valley with flat country for some distance either side of the river. The crossing took place at night in bright moonlight, but they could not find the appropriate crossing-point.

"Moving across this plain we heard the sound of tanks and there was some tracer but it was not directed specifically at us. I got onto a horse with somebody else but pretty soon it became clear that the animal could not take both of us so I slipped off, carrying my satchel in a plastic bag to keep the contents dry. Moments later water got into my boots and they felt like blocks of concrete round both my feet. I went under, struggled to the surface, took another deep breath, and went under again. Luckily, the way the current was running drew me onto the farther bank, but I did think I was probably going to drown. There were pack animals struggling all

around and people cut their baggage loose to help them swim and scramble out the other side. By good fortune, nobody was killed but my baggage had been cut loose and that was now gone."

'Abdul Baz' (the Falcon, as Peregrine was known to his Afghan friends) then stayed a few days in the town of Nahrin, where he was received with kindness by a man who knew nothing more of him than that he was travelling through. "He was a very kind and intelligent man and he was prepared to help me, which he did at great risk to himself and his family. He was a friend of the Mujahed that had been allotted to show me round the town and to make sure that I did not have any trouble. On the last night he came and woke me up at about two or three in the morning and said, hurry, you must go, where I cannot tell you. I think at that stage he had found the strain too much. In turn was rather nervous because I did not know what was going to happen to me, but in fact he took me to a safe place where I spent the rest of the day."

When the pressure became too much, he would retreat to a vineyard on the outskirts of the town. "It was a walled garden, almost biblical, beautiful in the blazing sun, with a stream running through it. The house in the garden had been blasted by fragments of a bomb which had dropped next door, killing two or three people, I think. And yet here was this island of peace where I used to go either when I had had too many questions from inquisitive townspeople or else just to sleep. Grapes hung in golden yellow bunches. The explosion had covered them with a bloom of fine powder and the first time I ate the sun-warmed fruit, the particles of grit crunched in my teeth and I thought of the people hit by the blast. Sometimes it was necessary to go there because to stay too long with one person was dangerous for them. The garden was a retreat and there was great beauty there but there are only very rare moments when you can be unaware of the war in some sense."

Travelling as a writer caused a certain amount of confusion. "I think some people understood why I was there, yes. Initially they were disappointed that I wasn't a doctor: of course, they just had to accept that. When I explained that I was going to be reporting their experience, presenting their views to the people of my country they were mistrustful, but usually after talking with them

for some time, they realised that I was open to their way of thinking and eager to understand their religion. It was a great bridge to be able to talk about aspects of Islam. I think that many people resent the West seeing their struggle in political terms and would like recognition of the fact that it is also a religious one, and I think understandably they feel that this is ignored by the West.

"I received kindness from most people, and even those who were very strict Muslims received me with courtesy. I think really that they knew much more about Christianity than we know about Islam, and they were prepared to accept me as a Christian, much more than many correspondingly committed Christians would accept Muslims. And I found even amongst very simple people, amongst shepherds and farmers, a very sound knowledge of their own religion and a remarkable knowledge of Christianity."

In Afghanistan only for a matter of months, it sometimes seemed exciting and nerve-racking from moment to moment, but the fact that many Afghans are forced to live like this the whole time must take its toll. "You could see the difference between those who were coming out of Afghanistan and those who were going in after a few months in Pakistan. You could glimpse what it was like before the war and there are pockets, I am sure, where people are living relatively unaffected by it. What was surprising was how extensive the effects of the war are, even in very remote places. For instance, I was going through one village and thinking to myself there cannot have been many, if any Westerners here, and rounding a corner found a build-

ing bombed flat. The Soviet calling card.

"I experienced two major bombing raids in Nahrin, and there were a couple of others in other parts of the town which I saw but which were not really all that close. Bombing is not pleasant and I suppose the most worrying moment is when a plane goes directly overhead and you do not know whether it has dropped its bomb. You have to wait five seconds to find out when and where the bomb explodes.

"The war is constantly there, even neutral events take on a sinister quality. I remember a girl who jumped round on hearing the thump of a rock falling. It was just a builder repairing a wall.

"What I hope is that people who enjoy reading travel books will read '*Under a Sickle Moon*' and emerge from the journey knowing a bit more about what it is like to be in Afghanistan at the moment, while the war is on, and also perhaps knowing a bit more about Islam and its importance to the Afghans, as a factor of the war. I hope they will realise that the war is not a news-item, but a reality, a continuing reality for millions of people who are suffering its effects and that those people have the same kind of hopes and fears that we do. Simply remembering them in a sense we help them, because suffering in a vacuum, suffering unknown to anyone else, I believe, is the hardest of all to bear."

**'UNDER A SICKLE MOON'** is published by Century Hutchinson and describes Peregrine Hodson's five hundred mile journey through Afghanistan. It is due for release in early January.



Peregrine Hodson — Photo: J. Gearing

# CONTENTS

Cover Photograph .....	Colin Boyle 1
Foreword .....	Lord Home 2
NEWS UPDATE .....	3
Buzkashi .....	Whitney Azoy 6
Anatomy of a Soviet Regime .....	8



## Profile: GUERRILLA WARFARE

Introduction .....	James Henderson 9
The Guerrilla .....	Christopher Dobson 10
Bleak Outlook? Western Observers' View .....	Julian Gearing 12
The Mujahideen Viewed from Within .....	14
North Caucasus — A Precedent for Afghanistan? .....	Marie Broxup 16
Chicken Street Comes to Peshawar .....	Harriet Sandys 19
Aid to the Afghan Wounded .....	Sir Oliver Forster 21
The Enduring Heart: Review .....	Anthony Freemantle 22
Noshe Djan: Review .....	Rosemarie Clancy 24
Brits in Afghanistan: Peregrine Hodson .....	James Henderson 26

## MEDICAL AID APPEAL

Dysentery, tuberculosis, chronic diarrhoea and rickets are diseases rarely heard of in the West today, but for the millions of Afghan refugees who have fled from their war-torn country to Pakistan such medical disorders are an everyday occurrence. With more refugees arriving each day the situation is getting out of hand.

The problem is compounded by the high illiteracy among the refugees and it presents considerable problems for the authorities in Pakistan. How can they get the message across that hygiene care is both a preventive and curative measure?

The Swedish Committee, a private aid organisation in Peshawar, has come up with an idea to alleviate the problem. They are to make a video concerned with Primary Health Care. The video would use case-studies as examples of how drinking contaminated water, poor sanitation and other unhygienic practices lead to poor health.

It is hoped that each clinic in the Refugee Camp will be able to show this video. But like most charitable projects funding is a problem. VHS video players and colour TV sets are required — as many as fifty — if this project is to be a success. So if you can spare a TV set or video player then please contact Afghanaid, the British registered Charity devoted to helping Afghans in need, at their London Office: 18 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LT. Tel. 01-836 9814.

## Afghanistan Support Committee AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Afghanistan Support Committee is to be held at 2.30 pm on Tuesday 25 November at the Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue WC2.

## NORTHERN IRELAND REGIONAL OFFICE

This is a newly-formed group which held its inaugural meeting in Londonderry at the end of September and raised some £300 for the ASC. Their next function was a Dress Show at the house of the Group's President, Mr Beresford-Ash, near Londonderry on 30th October to raise money. This was followed by lectures on Afghanistan by Sir Oliver Forster at the University of Ulster on 3rd November and the Queen's University, Belfast, on 4th November.

## SUBSCRIBE TO FREE AFGHANISTAN

If you would like to become an Associate Member of the Afghanistan Support Committee please send an annual subscription of £10 (or more). You will receive this Quarterly magazine, invitations to fund raising events and to the A.G.M. Please enclose subscription and your address to: The Afghanistan Support Committee, 18 Charing Cross Road, London WC2N 0HR.

## The Afghanistan Support Committee

The Afghanistan Support Committee is an all-party pressure group chaired by The Viscount Cranborne, MP. Our aim is to keep the plight of Afghan people in the forefront of the minds of the British people, and to support the Afghan Resistance to the Soviet invasion.

We do not support any one Resistance group nor do we involve ourselves in any military aid. Our purpose is rather to maximise press and media coverage of the war in Afghanistan; to ensure that the case of the mujahideen is heard and to produce and disseminate information together with our own publicity material.

Whenever possible we use volunteer workers which helps to minimise our small administrative costs. Any surplus is passed on to Afghanaid to relieve suffering inside Afghanistan.

Afghanaid is an independent charity which has a policy of funding relief work inside Afghanistan directly to the victims of the war. Secretariat services are provided for it by the Afghanistan Support Committee, but the two organisations are distinct with separate policy-making committees.

The Committee includes MPs from the Conservative, Labour, SDP, Liberal and Scottish National parties and a number of active independent members.

## Oxfordshire Afghanistan Support Group

The Group Programme for 1986/87 opened on 28 October with a joint Forum at the Oxford Union, at which Timothy Eggar, MP (FCO Minister), Olivier Roy (French expert on Afghanistan and contributor to this magazine) and Robert Bradnock (Liberal Party Foreign Affairs Panel Chairman) led the discussion. Unfortunately Ron Brown MP did not attend.

The rest of the season's programme is:

1986 17 November	Talk by Rupert McCowan on Afghanaid
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1987 22 January	AGM followed by video/film & discussion
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26 February	Fund-raising for Afghanaid: Arrangements
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April	(to be confirmed) 5 day Symposium on Afghan Studies
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All functions at Rhodes House Oxford at 8 pm unless otherwise stated. Contact: Rupert McCowan, BNC; Margaret Rubel, The Cottage, Parkhill, Wheatley, Oxon OX9 1NE (tel (87)3777); B J J Stubbings, 203 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 7AB (tel (0865)513842).

- Contributions, responses to contributions, and any other comments are warmly welcomed. They should be sent to: The Editor, at the address below:
- "Free Afghanistan" is published by the Afghanistan Support Committee, 18 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0HR.
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